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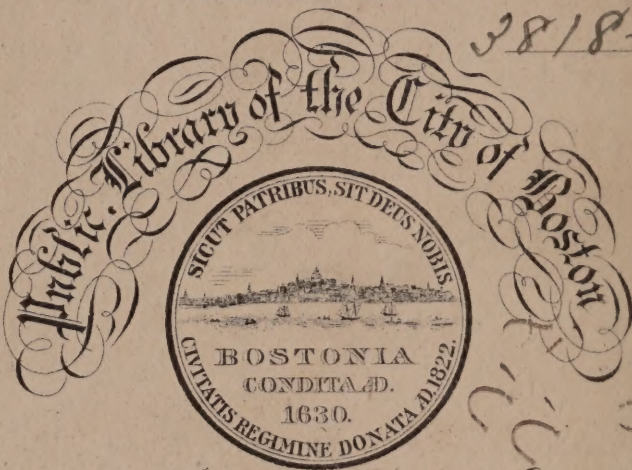
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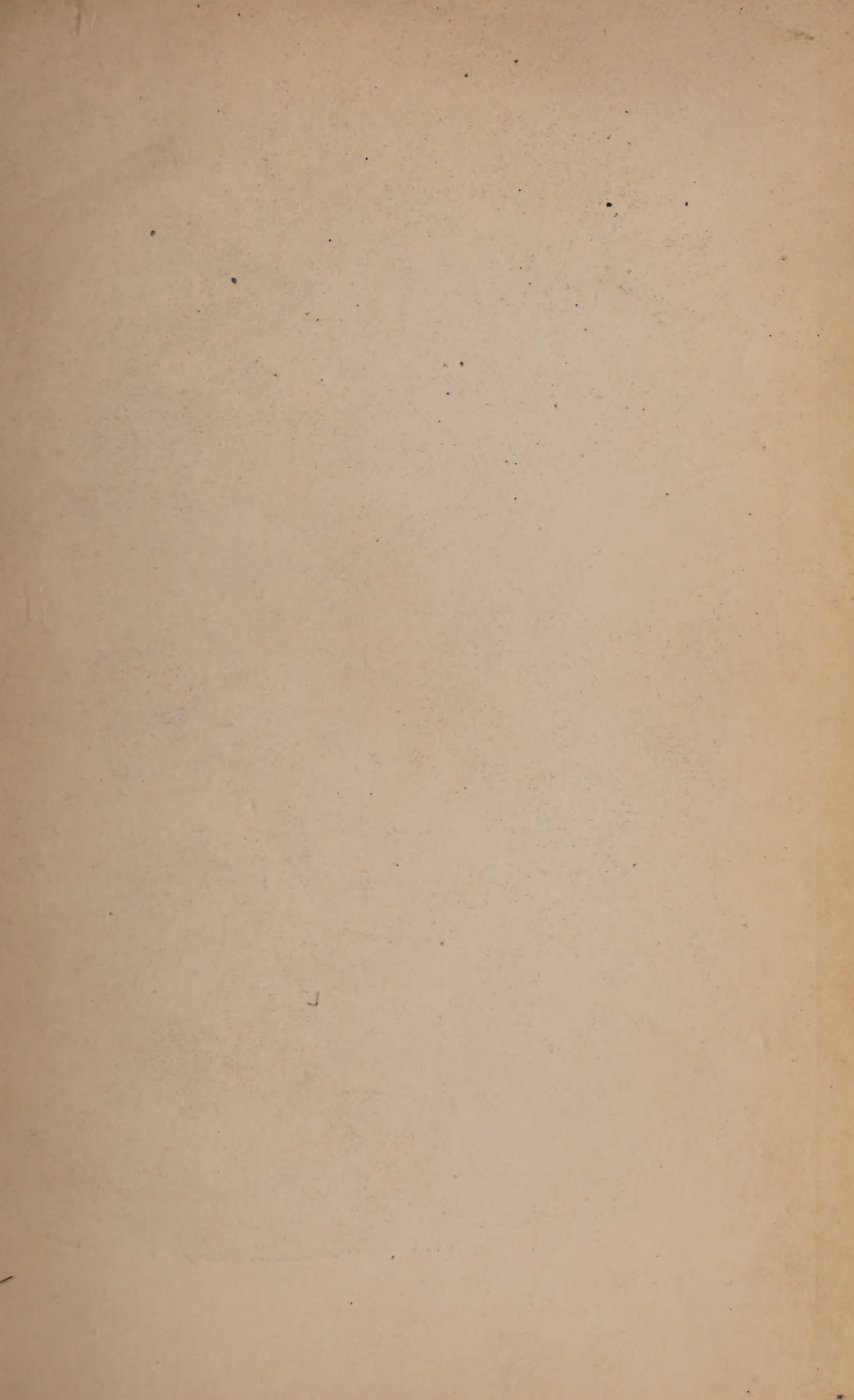
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# STUDIES FROM NATURE.

BY

DR. HERMANN MASIUS.

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES BONER.

Illustrated by E. Hesse, of Leipzig.



LONDON:

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## PREFACE.

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It is a pleasant thing to introduce a dear friend to a new circle of acquaintances, and to know beforehand that wherever he comes he will be liked, and surely find a hearty welcome. We experience a glad pride in watching the esteem and appreciation he receives; in seeing how his sterling qualities win for him all hearts, even as we ourselves were first drawn irresistibly towards him. And we share in his success: we rejoice at all the love, all the honour, that is shown him, and wish only that still more and more persons might learn his worth as thoroughly as we have done.

And it is with the same pleasurable emotion, and the same certainty of a kindly reception, that I now make English readers acquainted with the following pages: a work that has delighted me, on account of the contented mind which it betokens, a sympathy with all that is gentle or beautiful, and its ever latent, yet ever present,

genial humour, which, like the bright gold sand in the beds of rivers, is only seen when you look down into the clear deep water.

And then, too, what graphic descriptions of Nature!—equally charming, whether the subject be the venerable Oak, with its stern historical associations, or the Linden of the village green and of many a village festival; the Marsh by moonlight, where all is drear and eerie; or the willow by the rivulet on the peaceful pasturage, sunny, bright, and breezy as an English idyl of Constable.

The book *must* please,—its winsomeness is irresistible. For though it may have lost in the translation, there is so much of grace in every thought, that, be the garb what it may, its native comeliness will still appear.

I am not fortunate enough to be personally acquainted with the Author; nevertheless, I anticipate with lively satisfaction being able to surprise him with this illustrated edition of his work; for I think he will be glad to see how heartily the artist has entered into his subject, realizing the forms and giving the very spirit of character which Dr. Masius has described. The woodcuts are from the *atelier* of Mr. Bürkner, of Dresden, having been first drawn on the blocks by Mr. Hasse himself; and I am happy to be thus enabled to contribute to the diffusion of the works of two German artists, both of whom deserve to be known abroad.

The Notes at the end are, by far, not the least interest-



ing part of the book.\* They are full of the quaintest information,—old customs, long-forgotten rhymes, droll stories, classical allusions ; but all is given so pleasantly, that erudite learning seems rather to be a mere wile and a pastime, than associated, as we are accustomed to fancy, with dry study and grave pedantic mien. Never did schoolman, never surely did German professor, read to us texts from mouldy volumes and ancient chronicles with so cheery a voice !

Happy the schoolboys who have him for their master ! From his vast stores of reading, he will enliven the study of the classic past by connecting it with the living world in which they themselves are moving ; and many an object of curiosity will he point out, when taking them, as he doubtless often does, to ramble with him through the woods on a summer holiday.

CHARLES BONER.

*Donau Stauf, Ratisbon,*  
*December, 1854.*

\* In the body of the Work, these Notes are referred to by small figures.





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# STUDIES FROM NATURE.

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## I.

### FOREST TREES OF NORTHERN GERMANY.

NOTHING more clearly expresses the maternal character of Nature than vegetation; perhaps also there is nothing on which the beauty of a landscape more absolutely depends. Light and air, stream and mountain, are undoubtedly essential features in the physiognomy of nature; and these elements also may, without the addition of vegetable life, produce very considerable effect: the cliff on the sea-shore, and the cataract, may cause a grand impression; the steppe and the desert inspire us with awe: but how different is this fixed astonishment from the peace and the pleasure afforded by the silent blossoming of vegetation, its refreshing verdure, and the abundance and loveliness of its forms! Certain it is, that the beautiful general effect of a landscape is first rendered complete by living vegetation; and this too, although some of its fantastic and even dispiriting appearances be also present.

As regards beauty and character, the first place must be given to trees; therefore is it that the forest, from time

immemorial, has been the theme of song; and "sylvan solitude" is to this day the magic spell of romance. And indeed what can be compared to the forest,—Nature's own sanctuary? The slender columns rise boldly upward, and, uniting together, form proud halls, over which the tops throw an airy arch; and the wafting of the wind, like a distant hymn, murmurs in the silence. From the moss and flowers is shed balmy a freshness; sunbeams, and leaves, and dewdrops waver through the branches, and weave their hieroglyphics into the veil of twilight, mysteriously spread around, and carrying the mind by an invisible power into the realm of wonders. Such is the forest; the pleasant labyrinth of fairy lore and fable, the silent retreat of solitary thought.

But also, each single tree is a shape full of life and meaning. The elder-bush beside the cottage, the lime-tree near the fountain, the willow that hangs over the hillock above the grave,—is it not these that give such spots their charm, and consecrate them to poetry? Let us consider the tree from this point of view: from the root to the tips of its very leaves is such a singular interweaving and budding, such a peculiar play of colours and shapes, the whole is stamped with so marked a character, that it surely were no unworthy task to attempt giving the more considerable individuals of the Tree family in a series of *genre* pictures.

Thus delineated, the Tree were no longer the corpse which the botanist dissects, but would be a living poem, rife with the spirit that reigns throughout Nature. It would, in short, not be a mere study in Natural History,



but a contemplation engaging the mind,—at all events the affections. And this view of the subject has also its claims: the more so, inasmuch as almost all enjoyment of nature depends hereon; and in it too may be found a peculiar feature or prerogative of the German turn of mind. We reflect our own being in Nature: the “bodeful twilight” with which she addresses herself to us, permits us to recognize the struggle of human passions in her crises, and human sensibilities in her formations. Tree and stream narrate enigmas of past ages; the bird sings songs fraught with meaning, well understood by wise and pure hearts, such as our people ascribed to their legendary heroes: there is nothing without sympathetic life. All creation is kindled into bright flames at the altar of the soul, “like a living sacrifice before God.” This feeling for nature seems innate in the lyric, perhaps mystic, character of the German. Indeed the popular religion was especially such a pensive forest-worship, and the axe of the converter of the heathen might fell the tree, but could not break the spirit that had consecrated it. “Veneration and awe for the shades of their forests, the rustling of their tops, for the singing of the birds in the breezy summits, for the murmuring of their waters, were deeply implanted, and remained fixed in the Germanic tribes. Though their gods were banished thence, this world of spirits still dwelt therein: the wild fire whizzed through the forest; Eckart, the faithful guardian, sat on the stone; thousands of water-elves, dwarfs, and forest gnomes peopled the German soil. And the gentle-hearted, pious Christian, he too sometimes

lingered by the stream, or beneath the tree, to listen to their inspirations.”\* Anything like “sentiment” in the contemplation of Nature was, on the other hand, wholly foreign to the plastic-minded ancients. This may explain why Grecian art, which has set up so many immortal models, has made scarcely a single attempt in landscape painting; and that this latter, quite independent, without older examples to copy from, made suddenly its appearance, like a Minerva from the head of Jupiter, in the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>1)</sup> More in accordance with *their* mind was the custom of giving human attributes to animals. The fable of the Greeks and Romans, greatly as it differs in its epigrammatic, aphoristic form, from the affectionate familiarity and agreeable proximity of our fairy tale with animals as the actors, still proves sufficiently that also in this field classic antiquity displays a feeling and talent which, under other circumstances, might have been more fully developed.

As nearly every more perfectly developed animal has a decidedly marked type—a real *personality*—peculiar to it, just so, to a certain extent, may it also be said of the greatest number of trees. Each one at least is characterized by a peculiar physiognomy and mood. It has a life; there sleeps in it a Psyche. To give utterance to this unuttered mystery of the inner being of plants, would be an undertaking as difficult perhaps, as it assuredly were an interesting one. Resting, like all physiognomy, on the shifting ground of subjectiveness, such a delineation could scarcely

\* Wilibald Alexis.



be too mistrustful of itself. A passing feeling, a fantastic mood, deceives the eye with shapes and hues, which, when viewed more calmly, vanish in air. Individual impressions influence us; involuntarily our views become mannered, and instead of receiving our sensations *from* Nature,—instead of giving ourselves up to the sentiments which she inspires,—we are accustomed *to attribute our feelings to her*, and thus to view natural objects wholly through the medium of our own associations. I will say nothing of the difficulties which language alone presents. Whoever feels that language is something more than a mere given form, knows how often the most pliant expression is too harsh, too uncouth, to preserve the warm inborn breath of feeling, and to give a distinct shape to what is dimly stirring within. And how much is here which is only feeling! But language, with all its treasures, must appear still poorer, when required to mark the never-ending, ever-changing play of lines and lights with which Nature delights and ever surprises us anew. This is a field whither the painter's art alone can follow; and yet, in the delineation in question, it may not be omitted. Then again this task is rendered especially difficult, inasmuch as the original nature of the object is obscured and disturbed by manifold influences. Very different is the aspect of the oak on the hill, from the oak in the valley: of the birch near the dashing torrent, or beside the calm lake. The tree standing alone,—a clump of trees,—a wood,—the tree amongst its fellows, or associated with others;—all this presents a scale of the most varied moods. Add hereto the effects of light,

of the hour, and the seasons. What a contrast between the sunny, brooding repose of noon, and the ghostly, dreamy life of a moonlight night! between the serene, glad freshness of Spring, and the mournful sternness of Autumn! What a fairy picture, when the hoar-frost hangs his diamonds on the dusky crown of the Fir! How strange the effect of mist! what melancholy in the evening sky! what a yearning in the blue haze of the distance! And yet, despite all this, a specific impression, as the net *facit*, will remain; and the signification which tale or fable, art or custom has lent to this or that tree, is a guide by no means contemptible amid so many contending influences: for this too is founded principally on an æsthetic view of Nature.

Adopting this course, I shall now attempt to give, in the following pages, a sketch of the Forest Trees of Northern Germany. It will be a sketch, and nothing more. The picture itself,—the finished, complete picture, fraught with the soul of thought,—requires a master's hand—a Humboldt's or a Vischer's. The reference to their works has guarded me from not few errors; a service which I the more gratefully acknowledge, since, for years deprived of the sight of forest or mountain, I have been occasionally constrained to paint from memory.

Botany makes a distinction between Monocotyledons and Dicotyledons.\* Nor may this be overlooked in the

\* Monocotyledons have only one lobe in the seed; their leaves spring from the root,—as in palms, lilies, onions, etc. Dicotyledons have two lobes, and produce trees with wood, pith, and bark.—TRANSL.



æsthetic view of the subject, inasfar as a different development in the life of the plant produces a different character. In this respect it is immaterial, that the technicality of natural history altogether denies to monocotyledons the name of "tree." Here the Palm decidedly takes the rank of tree, and the Agave, the Aloe, etc. may at least claim a subordinate place in the same class.

Now both these tree formations are as opposed to each other as east and west; and Vischer, in his *Æsthetics*, denominates the characteristics of the class Monocotyledons simply as "the Oriental." And in truth, these shapes have something so solemnly grand, so dreamily fantastic, that in beholding them we are involuntarily transported to the regions of the East. For is it not even as an Eastern tale of Schcherazade, when the Aloe shoots on high its sharp-pointed leaves, like so many colossal arrows, from out the sandy desert, and lights up a myriad blossoms on the iron candelabra of its trunk? And where do we love more to fancy the Palm, with its proud turban of leaves, than in that land, whose plains are refreshed by the sacred waters of the Nile, from whose deserts rise the Pyramid and Sphinx? Vastness of form, that verges on the magnificent and grotesque, but which hardens also to a crystal brittleness; colours for the most part dark and dismal, and a heavy motionless repose, characterize this class. All that there is of life concentrates itself in the bare trunk and the intoxicatingly odorous blossoms. In the place of a vegetation of its own, a tribe of lianas colonize on its pillars, attach themselves to its arms and points, entwining them

with the most luxuriant, graceful garlands. In this manner the twofold character of the East—voluptuous fulness and rigid severity—stand side by side. In comparison with our vegetable world, this appears like a vegetative architecture; and, beyond a doubt, architecture is indebted to it for more than one of its designs. Let us remember only the splendours of the Alhambra, the slender minaret, the columns of the temple with the sheaves of leaves in the capital, and the gigantic candelabra of our palaces.

The noblest example of this class, if not of the whole kingdom of plants, is the Palm. Under its sheltering roof Apollo was born, and its leaves continued his ornament until he chose the laurel. The blossoms of the Palm are celebrated in Eastern song; its branches crowned the Olympic victor, and are with us too consecrated to great solemnities. Honour, Wisdom, Fruitfulness, Peace, select the Palm as their symbol. A second species of tree is scarcely to be found, that developes such manifold and varying forms. Natural history counts above two hundred kinds of this life-dispensing plant, which, in the south of Europe, lies almost trunkless on the ground (*Chamærops humilis*\*) ; in the back woods of India trails cordage four or five hundred feet long from tree to tree (*Calamus draco*) ; and on the coast of the New World rears its tops in gigantic gates of triumph up to heaven.

Here only the larger sort can be alluded to. Of these

\* Also in Sicily and Valencia, where a more African climate prevails, the Palm-tree thrives more luxuriantly. Near Elche, in Valencia, there is a wood of Date Palms, containing at least 50,000 trees, fifty and more feet in height. (See Wilkomm's Travels.







Humboldt and Martius have sketched truly poetical pictures, to which the author feels the greater necessity of referring, the less he is able to appeal to his own experience. It is chiefly the difference in the form, colour, and position of the leaves, which here serves as a guide; a difference which is peculiar to the families of the fan-shaped and feathery Palm. The former generally have the stronger, shorter trunk, from the top of which mount, in colossal fan-like shapes, the heavy leaves, now dark with sap, now glittering like silver. All about them is pompous gravity, which amounts to gloom when the young crown rests upon a layer of dry, scorched leaves. On the contrary, the tone is milder, where the leaves spread in horizontal screens, and shed cooling shade on the glowing earth, as is the case with the *Corypha umbraculifera*.

But the feathery Palm, especially the jagua and the cabbage Palms, excel all others in beauty, grace, simplicity, and sublimity, and combine here in forming a prodigy of nature. Often, when as yet scarce two feet high, the smooth trunk, sometimes of dazzling whiteness, rises, like a metal column, to the clouds; and on its summit, the finely-divided tufts rock in slow cadence, now proudly mounting, and now gracefully bending downward. The emerald-green of this majestic, yet at the same time beautiful cupola, with the light of the sun streaming through it, the delicate curling leaves, rising and sinking like a finely-woven net of azure, the golden apples of its clusters of fruit, the vanille perfume of the blossoms, whence the bulbul pours a sudden burst of melodious tones,—all



this produces a magical effect. The inhabitant of western climes, who doubtless has often trodden the other zone with expectations unsatisfied, acknowledges here, where every sense, as it were, celebrates a feast of enjoyment, that the Palm is indeed the tree of fairyland and of dreams. But most beautiful of all, perhaps, does it appear when towering, an aerial row of pillars, above the dense foliage of the various species of the *Ceiba*, above the laurel and the balsam-trees, "a grove above the grove." Rising from dusky night to sunlit heights, it addresses the soul as an image of freedom, towards which the human race is gradually advancing. And yet, even over the most royal shapes of this family of plants, there hangs that dreamy shadow of the East, that same breath of melancholy. This is more especially the case in those species with descending tufts and of paler colours. Thus it is with the ash-grey *Cocos Chilensis*, for instance. Nevertheless this impression is by no means predominant; nay, it is almost lost in the wondrous fulness of life, which is an exclusive peculiarity of this plant. For beside the blossom grows continually the fruit, and from the fading circle of its leaves there springs with restless energy the fresh green. Thus it is, that everything about the Palm assumes the expression of inexhaustible vigour. "The deep intellectual mind of the Greek comprehended this, when he designated with the same name that fabulous immortal bird, rising again from its own ashes, and the Palm, ever renovating to fresh youth."<sup>2</sup>) For when at last the tree lies dead beneath the weight of ages, even then a thousand labyrinth filaments

of parasitical plants twine round the trunk, and clothe it deceptively with an odorous and many-coloured, but yet spectral life.<sup>3</sup>)

I pass over the other forms, in which a different character is expressed, and mention only the Casuarina and the Cactus. These seem to find here their most fitting place, although they really belong to the Dicotyledons. Like mighty specimens of Shave-grass (*Equisetum*) the former rise on high; the remains, it would seem, of a past creation, like the island itself perhaps of which they both are natives. The slender stem, covered with a black, apparently charred bark, puts forth but a few regularly developed branches, and these separate into a series of thinner ramifications, continually diminishing, till at last they end in long, hanging, bristly tufts, whirring and hissing in the wind. Their dry, shadowless, strangely fibrous shape, is as much devoid of life, as the rigid, compact form of the various sorts of Cactus. These plants, which need hardly a drop of water for their growth, the gaseous exhalations of the air sufficing them for nourishment, have spread from the Cordilleras over nearly the whole of the torrid zone. They are "the springs of the desert," which give drink to the animal when every well is dried; and round the Bedouin village they build a wall, which in its own strength rises up an uninterrupted bulwark, impenetrable even to the leopard. With them the usual green of vegetation fades into a leaden grey; foliage ceases altogether. But, on the other hand, the trunk bursting with juices displays an inexhaustible diversity of whimsical forms: now with fantastic,

link-like arms, twining round the rock ; now like an organ rising in sharp-edged pillars ; now menacingly armed with thorns ; now, like hoary age, hung round with grey hair ; and amidst all this confusion shooting forth its wonderfully beautiful flame of blossoms. Thus does this vegetable family, which reminds us of the animal formations of the deep,—of polypi, corals, of sea-stars,—accord perfectly with the symmetrical, grotesque vegetation which it has hitherto been attempted to describe.

In direct contrast to the above, stands the race of Dicotyledons,—trees, properly so called. In their interlaced trunks and branches, in their dewy masses of foliage, continually waving and rustling, that brooding severity does not exist. Here rather there seems to breathe a restless, almost passionate life, a profound and ardent longing.<sup>4)</sup> It is as though a soul were struggling with strong throes to free itself from Nature's ban. The root keeps the tree chained to the soil, but the top strives longingly to fight its way beyond the narrow bounds. And when the sun of Spring sheds round it his warm streams of light, then indeed its life develops itself in leaves and blossoms. But Autumn again casts them to the earth ; the tree must soon lay aside its pomp, to put on Winter mourning. What child of the North but knows the sensations which this revival and decline of verdure excites ? With them is joined the deep interest involuntarily felt for trees, as the living memorials of times gone by, as mediators between Past and Present. They are the witnesses too of our own life :



our youth has grown up with them, our earliest and often most cherished thoughts are interwoven with them, and they are a waking echo even for our deeply slumbering feelings.

A group of trees is here to be distinguished, possessing certain points of resemblance with the Monocotyledons, and which form the transition to our foliage-clad trees: I allude to the trees of Southern Europe, whose nature Vischer designates as "plastic." In these too nobility and marked distinctness of character are not wanting; but in them the rigidity of Oriental formation merges into flowing, attractive forms, just as, on the other hand, the vast dimensions and strange contortions are confined within more pleasing proportions. The whole plant, with all its luxuriance, is often more shrub than tree; from out the closely interwoven, metallic, shining, evergreen foliage, fruits and blossoms sparkle; and, that the adornment of creepers be not wanting, ivy and the vine wreath garlands to hang upon the branches.

Take for example the Orange, with its juicy, green, massive foliage, and the wondrously reviving aroma of its blossoms; the slender Daphne bush; the Myrtle grove, with the warm colours of the Pomegranate and Oleander peeping through its dusky coolness; the Bread-tree of St. John, which, upon broad, oak-shaped, gnarled boughs, spreads its broad roof of leaves over the ground; or the soft Fig, with its serpentine, spreading branches, its large, beautifully scalloped leaf, and stemless fruit, rearing itself upwards.

But the Olive, the willow of Italy, takes precedence of all. The trunk is for the most part crooked, cloven, and rent as if struck by lightning, producing the very quaintest forms. From the fantastic-looking torso proceed their flexible branches, growing out into the air in every direction. Their confused growth prevents them from forming a fine mass; and it is only when many trees are united on one spot that they present, in some measure, the appearance of a wood. The pale green, dun-looking foliage gives a saddening tone to a picture; so that the tree of Minerva is in itself an unbeauteous element in the landscape. Nevertheless it wakens a degree of emotion; and when the sun shines brightly upon the weather-beaten white cliffs of the sea-coast, and the dazzled eye everywhere turns aside, it then rests with pleasure on this ashy-green.

On no other plant did antiquity bestow such grateful care as on the Olive, whose nourishing gifts were, it is true, quite indispensable to the South. When, according to tradition, Poseidon and Athene contended for the mastery, and the former with his trident struck water from the rock, Athene caused the Olive to spring up beside the fountain. It is the gift of the wisely-dispensing goddess, the first boundary-mark of calmly cultivating and busy life; and thus naturally presented itself as the symbol of peace, and of the order thereby effected. With the olive-branch in his hand the suppliant approaches the gods; with the olive-branch, he who comes to consult the oracle; with this symbol, after bravely fighting during six days and nights, the Carthaginians appear before Scipio, to implore

him to spare their lives.<sup>5)</sup> The East too knows this interpretation. In the story of the Deluge it is an olive-leaf which proclaims to the terrified world that Heaven is appeased. But the Olive would not so universally be hailed as the benefactor of man,<sup>6)</sup> if it were not, at the same time, of imperishable durability. Destroyed by fire almost to the very root, still from the stump spring forth its hal-  
lowed scions,

“ Which no hoary and no youthful chieftain  
With hostile hand, destroying, ever wasted ;  
For, with a look that wakes eternally,  
Does Jove, Protector of the Olive, see him  
And the fair-eyed Athena.”—*Sophocles*.

The comparison is therefore a striking one, when the poet likens the weal and thriving of a household to the many-branched Olive; and if the prophet wishes to picture to his afflicted people the peace and fulness of a returning golden age, he can associate his hopes with nothing better than the blessed, all-conquering strength of this tree (Hosea xiv. 6).

The Olive leads, by a natural transition, to the trees covered with foliage—strictly so called—which are about to be more especially described in the following pages. On the way however we must stop at a second species of trees, which, in their æsthetic character, likewise recall the group of Monocotyledons: these are the family of Pines.\* Gene-

\* The Germans mark the difference between trees covered with foliage, properly so called, and those which, like the Pines, have only sharp prickles. All belonging to the first sort come under the denomination “Laub-holz” (leaved trees); the others, “Nadel-holz” (spine-covered trees).—TRANSL.



rally claimed by naturalists as a feature of northern climes, they still find their representatives in all zones, from the Cedars of Lebanon to the Juniper-tree and Fir-bushes of the Scandinavian mountain-tops.

To use Oken's significant expression, they form "the mountains' roof." They stretch upwards from the wide plains, and Steppes of sand, leaving the foliage-covered trees below them. Where the granite builds its towers to the clouds, and the waters leap thundering from the rocky hollows; there this array of lances is planted, and the black banners wave. They climb to the highest summits, and, when all other vegetation is extinct, the Dwarf Pine (*Pinus pumilio*), laid level with the ground, still creeps on. The blast rages, amid its hair and shaggy beard of moss, and makes rough work with its grotesquely out-stretched arms, close-pressed to the earth; but the gnome does but twine his branches in a yet closer embrace, and fasten with iron strength on the stones of the moor, in which it has planted deep a hundred roots which nothing can tear out.

To express in a word the general character of the Fir genus, it may be said to have something rigid in its appearance; the more developed species to be menacingly grand, and mournful at the same time.

The Larch (*Larix*) forms the sole exception. Despite the steel-like nature of its wood, there is a serenity and a softness in its character. In the delight of unshackled freedom its branches spread abroad, round which tufts of needles are ranged, like a delicate wreath of feathers; then

too, in winter, the only one of all the cone-bearing plants, it throws off its foliage, and it is a delightful sight when it stretches out its young shoots like feelers to meet the Spring, decorated with its emerald buddings of young leaves and bright carmine catkins. The relation in which the Fir stands to the Oriental character, will perhaps best appear if we give a picture of some species, to which the others may be easily added as mere varieties.

### The Cypress.

The Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), if considered according to its geographical dispersion, belongs more to the East than to the West. It constitutes indeed a prominent feature in Greek and Italian landscape; but under northern climes it appears a homesick fugitive.

The trunk rises in noble outline; while branch, bough, and prickly leaf, in a densely woven mass, throw their heavy dark velvet mantle round its proud form. Like a pyramid, massive at the base, and gradually tapering to a point toward the top, this tree developes separate groups of boughs, in full and noble forms, whereby the mathematical severity of its growth is agreeably broken, and the whole formation acquires the charm of plastic beauty. The leaf, contracted into a needle-like shape, and still saturated with the fragrance\* which flows from the imperishable wood, stands up rigid and motionless round the branches, and completes, by the depth of its dark green, the peculiar

\* Hence εὐώδης κυπάρισσος, Hom. Od. V. 64.

character of the tree. Indeed this gloomy grandeur, this silence, which somewhat resembles sleep and somewhat majesty, is hardly to be met with in any other tree. For this reason has the Cypress especially become a symbol of mourning. Through a vaulted Cypress roof the ancient poet descends to the lower world; and when we adorn the coffin of the deceased, we would fain see the stern dark green of the time-honoured tree beside the lily and the palm.\*

It is surprising to behold the contrast where the Cypress shows itself amidst the gently-stirring, cheerful green bushes of the acacias and the paler olive.†) “Like the Cypress in the garden,” says Theocritus,†

“Did Helen in roseate shape appear before Lacedæmon.”

Masses of Cypress in long avenues have an imposing effect; they likewise, whether isolated or in clumps, form a magnificent ornament for the fronts of palaces, where they gain in real artistic importance, in proportion to the boldness and breadth of the horizontal lines of the architecture. In the neighbourhood of fountains they possess a peculiar beauty. The rising and falling sheaf of water, the magic play of colours in the myriad drops glittering with sunbeams, the luxuriant green of moss and lily, present here a joyous, inexhaustible fulness of Life, beside the sublime melancholy of Death, silent and solitary. But the abrupt contrast is softened by the gushing murmur of the spring, which, in its perfect rhythm of coming and going, lulls the soul into a state of dreamy yearning.

\* See Virgil, *Æn.* II. 713, VI. 216, III. 64.

† See Theocritus, *Idyll.* xviii. 26.



Yet nowhere perhaps do these melancholy trees, seemingly wrapped in thought, make so deep an impression as in the precincts of the convent. They are perfectly in their place here. Yonder, beneath those waving tops, that rise with a heavy and grave silence, stands the monk. A paradise opens before his eyes, in the splendour of the setting sun: he sees it not. His eye is turned inward into the depths of his own soul, and he is brooding over scenes now covered with ruins. Suddenly the convent bell sounds amid the stillness; the long-drawn tones of an *Ave* are wafted by. The monk has disappeared; but over the mourning tree, as over a gigantic sarcophagus, gleams the pale evening star.

Whilst this species stands mostly isolated,<sup>8)</sup> rarely drawing a dark curtain on the declivity of sunny mountains, the densely-leaved Cypress of the New World (*Cupressus disticha*) grows in company on the plains of California, Louisiana, and Virginia, forming extensive forests. Here, with the tree of some thousand years—in some instances the age has been computed at four thousand—the grandeur becomes a demoniac power. As yet no axe has thinned these aboriginal wildernesses, no skill drained these moors abounding in terrors, and which have been denounced under the name of Cypress Swamps, described by Sealsfield with such terrible and lively colouring. Gigantic trunks, more than three hundred feet in height and of unheard-of strength, crowd close together, entwining their branches, and spreading even over the brightest day the obscurity of night; so that the foot which penetrates

hither can only venture its timid step by the gleam of torches. Blocks of stone and half-rotten trunks of trees, piled up in wild confusion, rise from out the bottomless mire. Here alligators, serpents, and the biting tortoise lie in ambush, the sole lords of this frightful pool, reeking under the burning heat of an almost tropical sun. Such is the aspect of things in Summer; whilst in Spring the thick and muddy waters of overflowing rivers pour tumultuously for miles over this ungenial vegetation.

### The Red Pine.

After the Cypress comes the Pine (*Pinus picea*). It represents the formal type of the needle-leaved trees, and this too in its purest form: a redly gleaming column, overgrown with vine and ivy, the branches atop expanding serpent-like, and, above all, spreading broadly round, the blue-green crown. Thus does this slender tree stand before us as one of the noblest, and, in plastic beauty, most complete of its kind: it is, so to speak, the poetical signature of the South, and rightly does the painter never allow it to be wanting in an Italian landscape. In the frescoes of Pompeii the Pine reigns almost exclusively beside the cypress.

It loves the sandy, rocky shore, where its image is reflected in the sea, the colour of which adds beauty to its pointed leaves, and, winged by the wind, it divides the waters as the keel of a vessel. On this account the Greeks dedicated the Pine to the shore-laving, ship-bearing god;







whilst the Romans beheld in it the tree of mourning and death.<sup>9)</sup> In Germany, in the Middle Age, it appears in a not less significant character. There it is the tree of treason: encamped beneath a pine, Blanscandiz lures Genclun to break the oath of fealty; in the shade of the Pine the Paladin determines with Marsilia on Orlando's ruin.

Thus perhaps in the myth, to a certain degree unconsciously, that land was emblemized, to whose fatal charms the heroes of Tradition fell infatuated victims.<sup>10)</sup>

### The Scotch Fir.

As the Cypress to the Pine, so in the same relation stands the Silver Fir (*Abies*) to the Scotch Fir (*Pinus sylvestris*). The two last however greatly preponderate over the former, and cover whole districts; the Silver Fir prevailing in primitive mountains, and the Scotch Fir in barren alluvial soil. To this last circumstance doubtless is owing the melancholy which pine-forests produce, though indeed such woods are in themselves always uniform and sad. Here not a bird is heard, not a fountain flows; the very air is still and close, and all vegetation stagnates in the sand strewed over with the needle-like points. The heather alone weaves its dry net over the exhausted soil. It is, as it were, one large "forest churchyard," amongst whose bare pillars the eye vainly seeks some trace of life; till, wearied, it drops at length on the line of hot sand, where caravans of black ants are moving to and fro, and chirping grasshoppers basking in the sun. The impres-

sion of sterility and lonesomeness weighs upon the mind in all its force.

Quite different, on the other hand, is the Pine when seen on the edge of a fresh, green meadow, or mixed with the lighter foliage of other trees. Then at once that agreeable contrast is produced, which is able to remove the effect of the most untoward appearance. Besides, its growth is then freer and bolder, and more like that of the Pine of the South, with which the red cuirass of the trunk and the sea-green of the needles likewise corresponds. But these trunks often bend in knotty lines; and then too, instead of the umbel shape, the branches assume frequently a verticillating, pyramidal form. At the same time, this tree, in opposition to the silver fir with its deep and expanding roots, only throws out some single, insecure feelers on the surface of the sand; so that it yields groaning to the tempest, and entire rows are often overthrown.

Artists have seldom portrayed this tree; and yet it is highly picturesque. The sterile barrenness which surrounds it, that desert melancholy even, invests it with a poetry of its own; and masters of their art, like Everdingen and Blechen, have felt and comprehended it: their pine-forests are pearls in landscape painting. Finally, inhospitable and dismal as the Pine may seem, to the inhabitants of the North, amid the wintry torpor of Nature, it is, like all this species of tree, at once an indemnity for and a promise of Spring: "it is a pledge," to use the words of Humboldt, "that the inner life of plants, like the Promethean fire, is never extinct on our planet."



### The Silber Fir.

Of all the trees of this family, the Silver Fir is unquestionably the noblest. It strikes its roots into the sides of the mountain, and raises its giddy height in a steep perpendicular, while its branches sink heavily downward,—a grand pyramid, where the veiled spirit of the North sits enthroned, as though, in unceasing regret, yearning for the South.<sup>11)</sup> In this tree majesty and melancholy are joined to a trait of bold defiance: its gloomy sway seizes on us with stern power. But its high, aspiring form, that seems climbing toward the clouds, the sunlight that glimmers through its tops, the velvet carpet spread at its feet, preserved in perpetual freshness by the springs that bubble in every direction; the flowers of the wood around, the delicate clusters of the *Circæa*, the white blossoms of the wintergreen, the rosy tints of the *Vaccinium*,\* mixed with the purple of ripening berries;—all this warm, bright-coloured life causes the oppressed spirit to unbend, and, freed from the spell that bound it, to rise again with new elasticity and vigour.

How I love here to recall thee to my memory, lovely Erzgebirge, with thy darkly-shading chasms, and heights lit up by the soft blue of heaven! Everywhere around the proud trees are climbing upward, and from every branch drops odorous golden resin. Not a sound breaks the silence, save that yonder, from the rock, a mountain-torrent is dashing noisily. Night has already descended into the valleys; but upon the mountain the Fir stands forth, its

\* The Red Whortleberry.

head beaming in the sun's glory, like a priest of God, to bless the weary earth. Then, out of the thin haze, the moon emerges, and hangs silvery beams upon the branches; and every height and every depth is swimming and gleaming in the magic light. The wind awakes, agitating with gentle wing the strings of the great harp of the forest; and now, in the uttermost tops of the trees, begins that muffled, melancholy, rustling sound, resembling a distant, rushing noise, and touching the heart with religious awe. It is as though that repose of a world, which has descended on yon black, slumbering mountain-range, had gained the power of speech. Wondrous voices pass through the air; every wish, every passion is lulled; but from out the innermost depths of the soul, as from hallowed waters, arises the Angel of Prayer.

On the table-lands which shut in the Polar Circle, vast forests of Fir spread their unbroken gloom over the country. The mightiest stems are felled by thousands, and yet the wood appears as dense as before. The foaming stream carries them to the fiord, and down to the sea, where they are destined to lift their slender forms again on high, bared of the long boughs and the dark green points, but decked with a new snow-white covering of sails. The supple fibres of a plant have got the mastery over the tree: and the Forest King, but lately so firmly rooted in the ground, must now obey the broadly-spread canvas, spun from the delicate, blue-eyed flower, which seemed scarcely fitted for anything but to deck the meadow and to nourish the wild birds with its seed.

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It is now time to consider the leaf-covered trees. In order to avoid tiresome repetitions however, a more detailed account of the characteristic forms only will be given; the relative position of the other intermediate ones being thence easily determined.

We begin with the Willow.

This type of tree is especially represented in the South by the Olive; in the North, by the Willow itself, the Poplar, the Aspen, and the Birch. A freedom and lightness of growth is the predominant character of this class, with sometimes a gay elasticity, but often also an elegiac tenderness, amounting even to melting sensibility. Mighty forms, vigorous, glowing colours, are therefore not to be looked for in this class: indeed, some individuals of the species dwindle not seldom into mere low grey bushes. What was said above of the olive is applicable to all of this type: the branches are thin, and stand apart like rods; the leaves, rocking continually, are placed on long, slender stems; they are for the most part hard, and of a light colour on the reverse side.

### The Willow.

The Willow (*Salix*) is seldom seen among us otherwise than in a maimed state, with clumsy trunk and with shorn head. Given over as it is to the axe, it was also the tree to which of old was attached a curse and a judgement, and on which malefactors were executed. It was on a Willow that Judas hanged himself. The tough vitality of its na-



ture is quite in accordance with its constitutional appearance; for while from out the hollow bursten trunk parasitical plants shoot forth, there yet flourishes every Spring on the torn bark a luxuriant sheaf of green branches, in which many a merry bird has its dwelling. Peacefully beside the brook, like a herd that is drawing near to the watering-place, the Willows stretch along the banks; occasionally, too, they will stand apart from other trees, and form a simple frame round the village in the lowland. But dear as they are to us in connection with the days of joyous games and songs, they still remain, in such pollard shape, unbeautiful and void of character. Only when it has grown up untouched by the hand of man, is the Willow a really beautiful tree. Then, in spite of the exuberant and torn bark and the narrow pointed leaves, it has an elegant appearance; and the pliant branches, undulating unceasingly in waves of alternate light and shade, give it a decidedly gentle character.

This species shows itself to full perfection in the Weeping Willow (*Salix Babylonica*). Like long, downward-flowing hair, the branches hang pendent. There it stands, wholly enwrapped in self, a picture of sorrowful, womanly lament; in contrast to the Cypress, proud even in mourning, and which in its grief still uplifts the mind, attuning it solemnly. For this reason the sisters of Phaeton, while standing on the shore of Eridanus bewailing the lost one, were turned into Willows; but even then they were not forgetful of the beloved brother, and gave their golden tears to the flood. On this account Desdemona, when the direst

grief has befallen her, sings the moving song of the Willow; hence it is that Henry, in Walter Scott's 'Bride of Lammermoor,' gives his sister a willow-branch, when suffering a like sorrow. And, from the same cause, when the festivities of the feast of Pentecost are at an end, does the Samländer\* destroy the bower of lime-trees before his dwelling, and sets up a tent of willows in its stead. We like to place this tree over the hillock in the churchyard, or beside the solitary lake: it looks yearningly downward into the dark mirror, while around it the swan describes his circles, and from the deep the pale water-lily rises to the surface of the water.



### The Poplar.

The Lombardy Poplar (*Populus fastigiata*) betrays at once, by its dignified carriage and demeanour, and the shining green of its firm leaves, that it sprang originally from the South.

\* In East Prussia, on the Baltic coast.

There is perhaps no tree which has been viewed so differently as this one. The tall, slender stem, around which the upward-striving branches closely press, with their dense, deep-coloured foliage, shows the life of the Poplar to be a life of sunshine. Hence it has been celebrated by our poets as a symbol of longing, of dignified sorrow even; and it would seem that the ancients also attributed to it a similar signification.\* Certain it is, that they planted this tree pre-eminently frequently on roadsides, in public places, and near tombs and monuments; and that, with the exception of the olive, none appears more often on their coins and works of art. The grove of Academus, near Athens, was a Poplar avenue.

And yet we seldom like the Poplar. French gardening principally has appropriated it to its service; where, as being almost destitute of character and sparing of its shade, it must especially be welcome. The Poplar accommodated itself to the spiritless symmetry of this garden architecture; while, on the other hand, if properly grouped, it gave that air of proud, unbending gravity which, notwithstanding their rococo puerilities, these parks always aimed at. Bordering the highways of Germany, the Poplar is seen in all its nakedness, where even its fresh green is hidden by the dust. What dreariness there is in those endless rows and those bare forms, like so many finger-posts! In truth, poetic as the footpath is that winds carelessly along the skirts of a wood or beside the palings of a garden, just as wearisome and prosy is the perfectly straight road, with

\* See Homer, *Od.* X. 509.



its unmeaning, aristocratic poplars drawing themselves up as they stand beside each other. The “lanky loiterers” have no place in the romantic forest wilderness, nor in the field that the husbandman tills with the sweat of his brow. Even the incessant motion of the leaves,<sup>12)</sup> to which it seems this tree owes its name,\* causes an unpleasant sensation,—such murmuring of foliage being otherwise so grateful and acceptable a sound: it is a harsh, unmusical tone, annoying us like a continual chatter, from which there is no escape. And thus has fable found in the Poplar an emblem of talkativeness and self-conceit.

The German Poplar is less stiff, especially the Black Poplar; but even this one can lay no claim whatever to beauty. Next to it may be classed

### The Aspen.

(*Populus tremula*.)—This tree has the same slender form as the preceding one; the same leaf, only more delicately shaped and duller in colour; the same watery, pale bark. In its ramifications too there is much resemblance: the boughs, for the most part brittle, shoot out right and left at nearly equal distances, from a straight, low stem, forming a series of parallel lines. The Aspen puts forth its heart-shaped leaves, like small tablets at the end of a long and delicate stem, which turns round in a marvellous manner; and this stem, again, is fixed to the wood by only a very narrow basement. Thus it happens that the merest

\* *Pappel*, a Poplar; *pappeln*, to chatter; *Pappler*, a chatterer.

breath lifts the leaves, and even in the calmest weather a trembling is perceptible of green and silver, which never finishes; you still hear incessantly this strange, coy whisper. With it too the name of the tree is connected, as well as that widely-spread tradition of its haughty disobedience. While the Lord yet walked upon the earth (so relates the legend) all the trees bowed before Him, the Aspen alone excepted. For this reason it was visited with everlasting unrest, so that, like the wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, who never can repose, it is terrified and trembles at every breath. Scattered over the globe, the descendants of the presumptuous tree are everywhere to be found, a timorous race, eternally trembling and whispering amid the tranquillity of the woods.

### The Birch.

Bidding defiance to frost and tempest, to the lightning and even to corruption, thriving alike in the morass or in barren sand, the Birch demands but a span of earth on which to fasten its roots. On the grassy plains of North Germany it stands in scattered groups and copses; in the glens of Norway it is to be found forming long tracts of gleaming wood; and even where the Kjölen mountain-ridge is covered with eternal snows, the Birch may be seen clinging to the niggard soil. There, on the outermost frontier of vegetation, it bends over the rock, like the mourning genius of the vegetable world; while fresh, verdant life sinks back into the lap of Nature, whence it

struggled into existence. It is the Dwarf Birch (*Betula nana*) whose seeds are the sole winter nourishment of the lemming and the white partridge. Very possibly the region of the Birch extended formerly further north than now. In Iceland, at least, there stood in ancient times a dense wood of the lofty *Betula alba*, reaching from the sea-shore to the foot of the mountains; thus flinging a warm mantle round the then fruitful island, though now scarce a vestige is to be recognized in scattered bush and shrub. Stories are still told of charcoal-burners who here built their kilns; and in many places it is sufficient merely to strike the spade into the broad strata of turf, in order to chance upon stems of more than half a foot in thickness.

The Birch may be said to be feminine, if not effeminate, in character; although the poet, remembering the tribute which once the pedagogical tree demanded of him, calls it severe and bloodthirsty.<sup>13</sup>) With graceful waving outline the round slender stem rises upwards; slightly bent at top, yet opposing with pliant hardness the violence of the elements. Below, it is true, furrows, overgrown with grey moss, rend the smooth, satin-like bark, which gleams through the green leaves;

"As if upon a clear, bright night  
The moonshine had been left there."—*Lenau*.

Not a single powerful stem projects from the tough wood; on the contrary, a delicate network of twigs falls around it in long tresses, which, growing less dense toward the summit, causes the top of the tree to end in a feathery plume. There is not even room for the nest of the small-



est bird ; so airily is this branch-work raised. And then that dim gleaming of the leaves, spreading over the whole ; that fine, transparent veil which, floating continually to and fro, and causing the air to vibrate, scatters abroad its spice ! Is it not as though a wood-nymph, coy and languishing, were about to venture forth ?

Moreover it is the bowed form of the Birch, and the restless trembling of its long-stemmed leaves, calling forth a dreamy, even melancholy mood, which have procured for this tree the name of Weeping Birch. For this reason it has become in Germany, like the cypress in the south, the ornament of churchyards ; and thus, as a green mourning banner—as a lamenting ‘*Finis Poloniae!*’—it stands, yonder in the North, over the grave of a fallen nation.<sup>14</sup>) When seen in the twilight of moonshine, the Birch-grove produces a mood of higher excitement and expectancy. The dim shadowy outline of the tree, the ghostly paleness of its stem, moves the mind with visionary fancies. In early Spring, when the glimmer of the young leaves plays around its branches, then only does the Birch breathe a sunny, refreshing air of pleasantness : it brings us the first long-expected greeting of re-awakening life. Yet the advancing Autumn, which changes its foliage to a decided yellow, causes this tree to tell as an important feature in the landscape.

Different in character is the Birch of the Moor (*Betula pubescens*). Its boughs, mounting upwards with greater freedom, give it a gay, gladsome appearance ; the slight bend of the branches alone reminds of the delicate cha-

racter of the Weeping Birch, as their less dense foliage flutters about in bustling unrest. A serene, one might almost say a maidenly, grace is the character of this tree, and the villagers love to lead their dance around its fragrant May-time verdure. It causes you to rejoice like the sight of a lovely, fair-haired child; yet it is more apt than its graver sister to be lost in scanty insignificance. When forming single groups, rising like islands from the green of the meadows, or when more widely spread out over a large surface, seemingly reaching hands to each other, or, again, when serving as a contrast to oaks, firs, etc., these trees prove an effective feature in the landscape. This is especially the case on the peat-moors of Holland, whose gloomy lonesomeness is cheered but by their colouring. As a wood however, they are too insignificant and too monotonous in tone.

The ALDER (*Alnus*) may be considered as a scion of the Willow race. It exhibits a greater development, and forms, to a certain extent, the transition to the trees with more perfectly formed crowns, which we place last.

### The Alder,

like the Willow, is seldom seen in an uncrippled state. It grows quickly; but it is either cut down or made into a pollard, and the stump, surrounded by blackberry bushes, shoots forth a thicket of switches. It becomes a bush—a thicket of young sprigs, often covering all the ground in its neighbourhood with impenetrable underwood. In this

wise, the rigid character of the Alder specially shows itself; the stem straight, slender, without having anything imposing from a tall, strong growth; the branches projecting in a regular change of sharp lines and a verticillating form; the leaf obtuse, compact, and moving but little, on a tough stem. If the Alder be allowed full freedom of growth, this rigidity of character is considerably softened. The tree then acquires a more vigorous, succulent form; it leans in pleasing lines over the brook that gives moisture to its roots; and boughs and foliage arch themselves in a shady screen. The bark also grows of a deeper black. In everything its disposition for the watery element is distinctly pronounced.

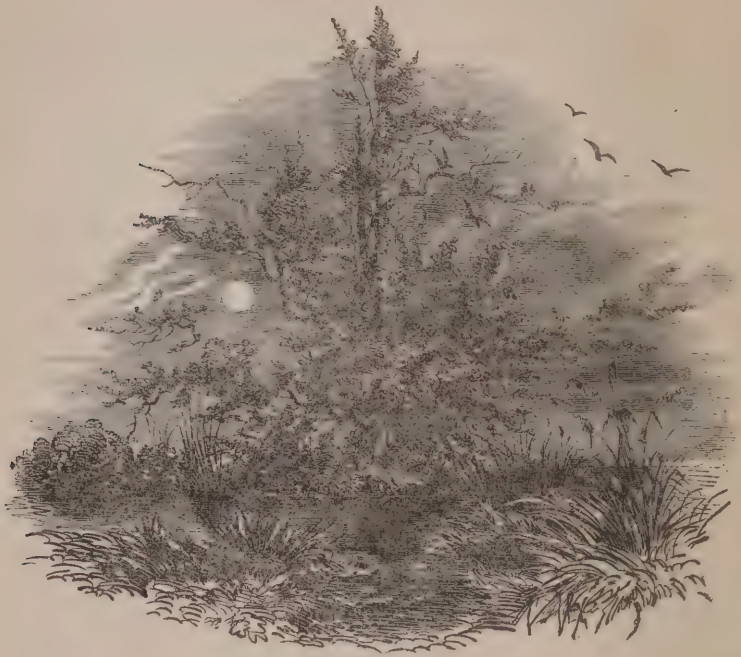
In pictures of gay rural scenery, as well as in those where the sterner poetry of lonely moorlands and ponds is expressed, the Alder justly finds a place. It takes its stand close to the edge of the rivulet; and who is there that does not find it charming in such companionship? The deep green foliage and the dark-coloured trunk contrast pleasantly with the bright verdure of the meadows, and are in harmony with the coolness of the water that rolls murmuringly over the pebbles. The shadow of the leaves throws a constantly-playing network over the glittering waves, where the trout is basking, and whither the swallow and the delicate-footed wagtail come to bathe. From the banks, between bright tufts and stalks, blue forget-me-nots hang down; the yellow iris peeps inquiringly upward; along the pasture peaceful herds are grazing and reposing; a mill is clapping near, and from among the bushes the



village church-spire rises patriarchally. The bluest and sunniest sky belongs to this idyl, as a matter of course. But the Alder follows the brook down to the more retired recesses of the valley, and spreads over them that secret gloom in which the roe conceals herself, and whence the redbreast chirrups. The water lies deep and motionless, —a black crystal; but on the right and left the branches, in dimly-gleaming twilight, press forward toward each other: a sudden gust moves them; they wave, whisper; —the spirit of the woods is aroused; the roe springs forth, —and again all is still. Such is the Alder in the village and in solitude.

On the moor the Alders produce a different and sterner effect. There, the morass, with its vapours, the clouds, and the loneliness conspire to weave a traditionary poesy round the silently-dreaming trees. A branch, a leaf, falls whirling downward; the cry of the bittern is heard in the rushes; the bull-frog answers from afar; wandering storks sail by; a faint beam now and then throws its glimmer on the water, which twines like the arms of polypi round the monotonous islands of brambles and bushes. Through the air a drearissime, oppressive, mouldy breath is everywhere moving; even the green of the water-plants is faded, or inclines to a poisonous yellow. A heavy, saddening gloom broods over the scene, and oppresses the heart. But this mood becomes dread when the vapours ensconce themselves in the straggling-shooted trees, and the night-wind sighs over the plain, and the trembling leaves beat against each other; or when the moon throws her light over the

waste, and will-o'-the wisps, like phantoms, come dancing forth. This is a northern scene,—a genuine Erl-king landscape.<sup>13)</sup>



We now arrive at the most developed form of the German broad-leaved trees,—the Oak, the Beech, the Elm, and the Lime. Although it is not exactly possible to trace them back to a fixed type, they are however distinguished from those before described by a more powerful and more strongly-developed build. The trunk does not attain the height of the coniferous trees, but it exceeds them in size and strength, inasmuch as it puts forth a luxuriant and often a bold ramification on every side. Thus separate divisions are formed,—compact masses, which come to a close in the beautifully-modelled crown. In unison with

these features, the foliage is more succulent, denser, and assumes altogether a greater breadth. If it depended on the name only, these trees might be called Crown Trees ; while those with the needle-pointed foliage might be designated as Stem or Shaft Trees.

### The Oak.

The Oak is the aboriginal tree of Europe. The Pelasgi, and those wandering hordes who once sought a home on the shores of Greece, revered it as the Tree of Life—as the precious gift of the great Foster-father. Its fruit appeased their hunger ;<sup>14)</sup> in its trunk they found a dwelling ; from beneath its roots sprang the rivulet that gave them drink. And even long after the barbarian rudeness of human customs had passed away, reverence for the dispenser of blessings still lived on in the minds of the people. The Greeks and Romans consecrated it to the Gods of Olympus ; from its rustling branches voices of the future were heard. But the German and the Scandinavian beheld the abode of the God of Thunder in the oak-tops, and their priests cherished the sacred mistletoe growing on its trunk ; the same which, in the hand of the blind Hödhr, became an arrow of Death, when, wounding Balder with it, he took the life of the youthful God of Spring.<sup>15)</sup> In like manner the Celtic and Slavonian nations paid the Dryad mysterious rites. Thus too, as though in emulation, a sense for Nature and her appearances has, in prophetic spirit, woven round this tree an evergreen of traditions and song.



In our present poesy, truly, it leads but a sorrowful, not to say an artificial life; but it is rooted all the deeper in songs and tales of those nations, who, more self-dependent, or remoter than we from the world's great stage, have preserved their olden manners in greater purity.<sup>16)</sup>

There was no tree which could be compared to it for bold, irregular beauty; and none, either, offered such efficient service for the first wants of man. The house of the living, the coffin of the dead, the ship which bore the crusader, the spear which the hunter wielded,—the Oak afforded them all. To cherish it therefore became a duty, and the Anglo-Saxon alphabet beautifully says of it—

“ On the land the Oak is  
To the children of men  
For the flesh a depository;  
It travels often  
Over the path of the waterfowl,  
Exploring the lake.  
Let each one possess an Oak—  
The noble tree!”

There is luxuriance and vigour in its growth, from the far-reaching root to the firm shield-like leaf, and the compact bronze fruit. In the daring zigzag of its branches, and in the grand crookedness of the stem, there stands the Oak as the Tree of Strength (*Quercus robur*), as though it were preparing to deal some overwhelming blow. It is the hoar king of the forest, to whom the eagle resorts, and whom the hero takes for an example.<sup>17)</sup> How fitting, when Homer makes the two Lapithæ stand as guardians before the ships,—

“Two lofty-topp’d oaks of the mountain,  
Unchanging by tempest, and rain-shower firmly enduring!”

And how ingenious the device, that the English kings, when they mounted the throne, selected an oak to bear their name and carry it down to coming generations!

Another circumstance also seems to proclaim the heroic nature of the tree:—it is never seen in a crowd, forming what may properly be termed a wood. The Oak Forest is nothing more than a poetical figure; for the Oak stands alone, or mingled with other trees of different foliage, which it dominates with venerable feudal sovereignty. Only in the low plains of the North is it often found associated in fine groups. It then forms a Ruysdael picture:—a meadow of luxuriant green, a blue sky, a transparent rivulet; here and there the stag raises his proud antlers,—he has heard the cry of the chase from afar; pleasant peeps are obtained between the dark grotesque trunks; and through the deep solemn masses of foliage there glides silently a golden sunbeam.

But it is on the mountain-height that the Oak appears in all its grandeur. In the aboriginal forests you should behold those whose age is a thousand years. Lessing and Rubens have painted them. Far above the walls of rock the roots gripe with their distorted clutches deep into the stony ribs, as if they would cleave the earth; and the tree shoots and grows upwards out of the ground, slowly but of gigantic size, even unto the pathway of the clouds. And around the body and limbs of the giant the deeply-scarred bark fastens itself, like impenetrable armour; the

gnarled branches threaten wrathfully ; and when the north wind hurls his spear against the iron trunk, a shaggy covering of moss covers its sides with a dense shield. Thus has the monarch of the mountain planted his foot up yonder,—a giant hero, equipped and rejoicing to fight out the battle of the clouds with Æolus and his wild combatants. But from below ivy and honeysuckle climb up and twine around the stem ; and the linnet and blackbird weave fresh songs amid its branches.

Such is the German Oak, the ruin where the traditions of ages lie buried. It has seen Guelph, Ghibelline, Ziska and Procopius, Friedland and the Swedes. From beneath its boughs perchance the *Dies iræ* of persecuted heretics has rolled forth upon the night with a stern murmur ; its shadow too may have covered the predatory soldier while listening for the tramp of the treasure-laden baggage-train. It stands yet, proud and green ; but there are few like it, by which the reflective fancy may count back in the past the boundary-marks of history ; and if the axe, which in our day is unsparingly wielded against all that is planted by Nature, be not withheld, it too will also fall ere long.

How differently does England, so poor in forests, show her veneration for these witnesses of the past ! She is proud of her Oaks, and has a right to be so. In the Forest of Sherwood stands to this day the tree under which John Lackland gave audience, and perhaps this tree in John's time was already centuries old. There is the Oak in which Robin Hood presided when the royal deer were cut up and distributed. There is the Parliament Oak, in which he



held his meetings; the Green Oak of the Valley, in whose towering and rifted trunk the outlaw and all his merry company met together. A stone still points out in the New Forest where, until a hundred years ago, the Oak-tree stood, under whose branches William Rufus fell by the hand of Tyrrell. Thus, every old tree here calls to mind a memorable scene or personage. And should it be asked, "What protected these trees?" we answer, The spirit of self-respect and reverence for the law,—the spirit which England's proud, troublous history has produced;—this it is which watches over her relics and her monuments.

### The Beech.

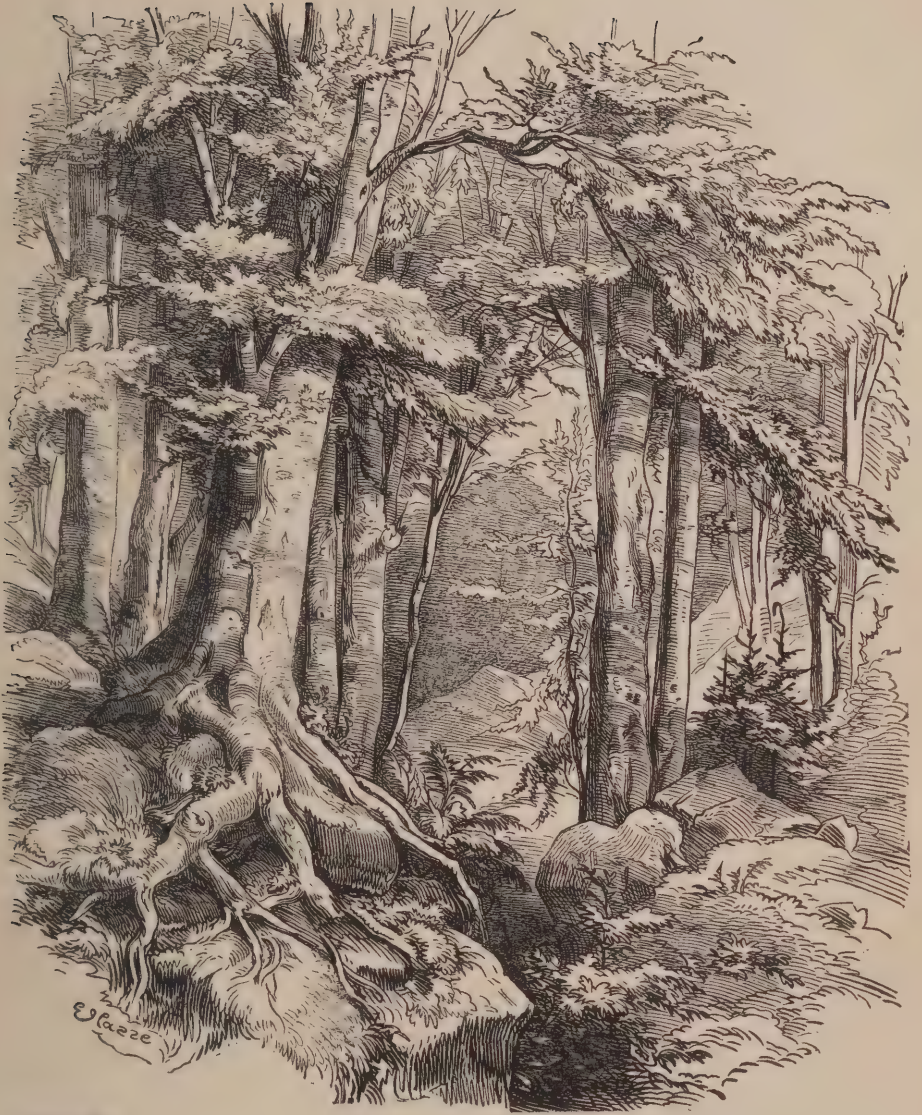
Beside the Oak, the Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) deserves the first prize among our forest-trees. Gently undulating plains are its favourite resort; and it gladly exchanges the mountain-heights for the line of sunny hills at their feet. This tree predominates throughout all Thuringia, in the valleys of the Harz, on the island of Rügen, and in the Holstein Marches; but in the full pride of its growth it overlooks the bays of Copenhagen, as indeed the North may be said to be the Land of Beeches.

Of all trees the Beech is the most companionable; it does not send its roots deep into the earth, and likes to intermix them with those of its neighbours. In this wise, with interwoven roots and blended tops, a Beech-wood bids defiance to the storms and to the heat of summer. However, without foreign protection it soon succumbs to the

weather: the more fitting emblem perhaps for a people that have preferred the oak as their symbol on account of its defying the tempest in haughty isolation.

The round stem of the Beech mounts lightly but proudly upward, with all the vigour of youth; the silvery-grey smooth bark encloses it firmly, contrasting agreeably with the green velvet of the moss which sometimes fixes there. It almost seems as though the hardness of the wood might be discerned through its scanty covering, showing, when it swells out, like a sturdy, muscular arm. It is significant that, according to olden German belief, the lightning may not touch this tree. Branch and bough first show themselves on high; they spread out in sharp lines, almost like those of the fir, and closely press together till they form a single dome. But, imposing as this rotunda is, those depths and structural parts are wanting, which give to the crowns of other trees so plastic and picturesque a charm. The obtuse, egg-shaped leaf accords with the character of the whole. It forms, in accordance with the growth of the branches, roof-like layers ending in a point, or it flies apart in flakes, without blending in a mass. Being dense in structure and firmly attached to the short stem, it does not lend itself to the light sounding play of the wind.

From all this it will be seen that the Beech has a certain architectural hardness in its forms: and one is inclined to suspect that the Beech-wood was that natural temple which Germanic Christian architecture transfigured in its cathedrals. It is to this tree also, which on account of its fruit even might have been valued by our ancestors,







that is attached the oldest mystery of prophecy and of writing. For in reality the first letters were nothing else but *wands of Beech*,\* which, furnished with certain signs, were thrown on the ground and then interpreted (Runes). Vischer calls the Beech rigid, and the Englishman, Gilpin, even terms it clumsy.<sup>18)</sup> At all events this is exaggerated; and it is just the foliage, which the latter author views so unfavourably, that constitutes perhaps its chief ornament. The stiff form of the leaf is softened by a gentle undulation playing round the edge; it comes forth moreover in the richest, most verdant luxuriance; and, when shone upon by the sun, each separate leaf presents a mirror displaying the loveliest changes of light. And so deeply does it imbibe this light, that even when the frost has already touched it, the Beech-leaf grows brilliant with burning tints of gold, far surpassing all other foliage. It may truly be said that here, as in the light-grey covering of the stem, the poetry of colour makes amends for hardness and severity of form. Yet even this form, severe as it is, how massive, how pure, how compact! Beneath the columns of the Beech forest you cease to feel that saddening, awe-inspiring breath, that dim yearning, which a wood generally inspires. It is the spirit of healthful vigour that here stirs his wings, and moves the soul with a joyful excitement.

The Beech also has its mystic influence: this, as already hinted, lies in the colouring, and it is just the brightest daylight that most calls it forth. Whoever has wandered

\* 'Buch-stäbe,' German for *letter*: literally, 'Beech-wand:' hence the allusion in the text.—TRANSL.

through the Thuringian Forest or the valley of the Ilse will know this spell. Immense blocks, surrounded by rank ferns, lie at the foot of the sedate-looking trees; among which the rivulet, breathing coolness, passes its silver threads between roots and flowers. But the noon is glowing above their tops. Every leaf becomes a drop of light, a sparkling emerald, and a fairy-like shining of green and gold is trembling through the hall. The foxglove sets up its tapers; from the clefts in the stone the lizard creeps; blue-winged dragon-flies rock themselves on the long blades of grass; occasionally a sunbeam streams down the stems; many-coloured globules of light are trembling on the mossy carpet; all is so strangely still, as though enchanted: but yonder, where the forest portico is open, meads and villages are beckoning, a streamlet sparkles, and the melodious bells of cattle are sounding in friendly welcome.

### The Elm.

The Elm (*Ulmus*) has a mixed character which is more difficult to seize on. In the hard and sharp outline of leaf and trunk it reminds us of the beech; while, on the other hand, its loose and more scanty ramification shows a relationship with the lime. On the whole, the harder, unyielding character prevails. The Elm is an unattractive, I might almost say a morose, tree. The trunk in general rises vigorously upwards, but the bark is crossed by sharp furrows; the branches, which below close round its growth like entangled hair, hang mutilated downwards. At the



same time, there is a want of energy and luxuriance about the crown; the leaf is sharply notched, as dry as sand, and thinly scattered over the branches; while below, around the trunk, whole bushes of young shoots start up, so that you feel but little inclination to repose beneath this tree, and there give way to those pleasant dreams which generally in the green shade of leaves float before the soul. All the charm of colour is gone from this worn-out foliage, which even when moved by the wind makes only a whining noise; and instead of being enlivened by the songs of merry choristers, the cawing of rooks is all that proceeds from it. The unsocial solitude to which this tree withdraws from all its fellows, serves to augment the gloomy impression which it leaves behind. Being neither at home in the wood nor in the garden, it stands dispersed on greens, in hedges, and on the roadside, often gnarled in the very stubbornest forms. In the South, where the vine twines its tendrils round the Elm, it appears before us in seemingly renovated youth; and has thus become a favourite picture of the Latin and Italian lyric poets; though the oft-sung Elm of Hirsau proves that this tree, even with us, may develope itself in beauty. When such is the case, it assumes decidedly the type of the lime.

### *The Lime.*

As in the stature of Apollo manly vigour and feminine softness were blended in an ideal form, just so the Lime (*Tilia*) appears before us full of dignity and grace, in per-

fect strength and delicacy,—the most glorious of all our trees. It was the Lime that Aphrodite chose for a sanctuary. Emulating the oak in noble proportions, the trunk uplifts itself: grandly and quietly the crown rises on high, and from every arm sprig and bough shoot forth. But, like the jet of water that falls back again in an harmonious arch, the thicket of branches, all striving upwards into a point, again sinks down in a pleasing wavy line, the luxuriant fulness of its strength resolving itself into a hanging, bosky screen, beautiful even without the adornments of summer. Around this exquisite structure the dense foliage groups itself, every leaf a small green heart, easily put in motion. Upon these the blossoms hang their fragrant stamina; the forms of the branches are lost in their uncertain outline. Thus the whole presents a unique leafy palace, full of majesty and loveliness.<sup>19)</sup>

Whether or not it be a mere chance play of language, at all events the melodious, gentle name belongs fittingly to the Lime, which in German poesy holds a place similar to that grief-dispelling tree of Eastern fable which Damajanti calls upon for the restoration of her Nalas.\* For it is also the tree of love and of song. Beneath its shade the brooks murmur, the bee hums her busy pæans in its blossoms, and the national song breathes in its fragrance.

In Germany the Lime is not a forest-tree:† confidingly

\* 'Linde,' Lime or Linden tree; 'lind' (adjective), soft, mild, gentle. Hence, 'lindern,' to alleviate, assuage, soften.—TRANSL.

† In the warmer districts of Russia there are, on the contrary, large forests of Limes; and hence the Russians call July, the month in which they blossom, the Linden month.







it leaves the wilderness, and approaches man and his dwelling. Even amid the pomp of regal cities it has accompanied him,—an innocent, holy welcoming of Nature. But its home is not there. In the village, in the old castle courtyard, beside the brook, on the hill where the reapers rest, in the valley where the pipe is sounding,—that is its place. It is the tree of idyls, in whose breezy shade the peaceful home-life of “Louisa” unfolds; beneath whose branches the young collect to play, and the aged to hold serious converse. Such is the Linden, in whose shade the poet falls a-dreaming and forgets his verse:—

“There I forgot my song outright,  
And wellnigh slept in my own despite;”

from whose boughs the nightingale sends a greeting to him and to his love:—

“On the upland,  
Beneath the Limes,  
'Twas there we two  
Were couch'd many times;  
And flowers we pluck'd,  
While down in the vale,  
Tantaradi!  
Sounded the song  
Of the nightingale.”\*

On its bark remembrance inscribes the beloved name, and from out the grave of affection it thrives in flourishing life.

“Then plant above my grave a Lime  
When I am dead one day:  
There's fragrance in the bloom, and that  
No wind can blow away.”

\* Walter von der Vogelweide.

A separate group is formed by the trees with composite leaves. They are the Ash, Acacia, and Walnut; to which, on account of its peculiarly-formed foliage, the Maple may also be added. In North Germany none of these trees appear in groups; and they but seldom attain the size of our oaks, limes, or beeches, although a certain rank succulency characterizes them all. A slight sketch of each will be sufficient.

Perhaps the most beautiful of these is the Maple (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*). The trunk rises in a slender yet strong shaft, covered with a reddish-grey bark like plates of metal; when dry these fall off in flakes, and as thus fresh layers are uncovered, the stem displays a field of outlines which, in their many-coloured intertwinings, seem to form a picturesque Runic writing. The branches stretch out their arms to a distance, imbibing in full draughts light and air. The leaves, as large as a hand, and fantastically indented, are thickly strewn over the framework of boughs; they flutter in the breeze on long stems, and give the tree a peculiar romantic beauty. Cheerfulness and serenity are marked in the sunny overt tree. Hence the Maple was formerly an ornament of palaces;<sup>20</sup>) and the reverence which doubtlessly was paid to it in heathen times, appears even to have descended to the Middle Ages. Its roots were sprinkled with wine; if the tree were felled, it was done bareheaded, kneeling, and amidst invocations and vows.\*<sup>21</sup>)

\* Bernatz, in his 'Scenes in Ethiopia,' says that "Maple-trees, under which the natives perform their religious rites, and offer sacrifices to their chief gods, Oglia and Akete, are considered holy."—TRANSL.



Next to the Maple comes the Ash (*Fraxinus*), of all trees of the North the most famous in tradition. The tree Ygdrasil is an ash: it supports the universe, and from an ash and an alder the sons of Bör formed the first human pair. The snake<sup>22</sup>) fears and flies from its shade. It is perhaps not so much the beauty as the strength and height which obtained for it so important a place. On this account it is taken, in old German ballads, as a symbol of the hero more frequently than the oak. Thus Walter of Aquitaine is compared to the storm-surrounded Ash, when, invaded in the castle of Wasichenstein by Gunther and the Burgundians, he repels their united attack. In accordance with this is the praise of the old Saxon alphabet:

“Ash-tree towers high,  
Beloved of man.  
Firmly rooted  
It maintains its stand,  
Even though assail'd  
By many men.”

In like manner the Greeks and Romans consecrated this tree to the gods of murderous strife;\* for its tough wood furnished the thrower of the javelin with his weapon; and the Latin word *fraxinus* (if not so typically as the old German *Ask*) stands quite simply for “lance.”

Its firm stem shoots straight upwards, like the beech; only the bark, covered with yellowish-green lichens, has a softer, more crumbling character. Not until the trunk has attained a certain height do the branches spread themselves

\* Hence, *Eschen Nymphen* (nymphs of the Ash); Melian nymphs (μελίας, the Ash). See Hesiod, Theogon. v. 183.

out, which then form nobly-proportioned lines. There is altogether a certain "style" in the tree, reminding of the landscapes of Poussin and Claude. Its least pleasing part is the foliage; for the saw-shaped leaf, notwithstanding its pendent nature, gives a pointedness of form to the tree, which however assumes very beautiful autumnal tints. In old trees the foliage displays great luxuriance, and develops those plastic forms on which account the Ash was especially introduced into the so-called Historic Landscapes. In younger trees it is scanty, and broken up into tufts.

The Acacia (*Robinia Pseudacacia*) is at once recognized as a stranger that has immigrated hither, by the sensitive tenderness of its leafy woof, the aroma of its bunch of blossom, as well as by the screen-like ramification of the somewhat bare branches. In our German climate it is kept in a state of poverty, not to say of sickness; and the sharp fissures, covering the bark like network, give it something of fragility. The elegance of its growth, like that of a flower, makes this tree a fitting ornament of public places, fountains, and the fronts of mansions.

The Horse Chestnut (*Æsculus Hippocastanum*) belongs originally to a milder zone.\* And yet it is the earliest to grow green of all the trees grouped here. When beneath the rays of a March sun all sorts of herbs busily come forth, then do its large resin-dropping buds begin to swell

\* The home of the Horse Chestnut, as well as of the Chestnut, is Persia; according to others however, the Thessalian town Castanea. In Cæsar's time at least the edible chestnut was introduced into Italy, and thence brought with the vine into the countries bordering the Rhine. Most of the "chestnut orchards" on the Rhine and Neckar are Roman plantations.

and germinate, impatient to throw off the winter covering. When the first warm rain has fallen, the green folds unclothe, and the stalk, with its little horse-shoe, appears boldly on the branch; though as yet the leaves droop languidly and coy, like butterflies just crept out of the chrysalis. But in a few days they gain freshness and elasticity; and now they stretch out their feelers most oddly, as though trying to grasp the sunshine. Meanwhile a flower-bud here and there shoots upwards, and anon the tree has lighted its festal girandoles; turret on turret rises crisp and white on high, and the whole flickers like a chandelier of Spring. When once the blossoms are past, and the thickly-crowding leaves have filled the intervening spaces, a mighty dome of foliage alone remains; which, in its monotony and poverty of forms, is certainly not beautiful. This tree however, like the acacia, on account of its regularity and symmetry, may be placed advantageously in promenades and courtyards.

In stately size, cheerful and strong, the Walnut (*Juglans regia*) displays itself. The branches, which, slightly bent, fling themselves forwards, rise from below in profusion round the trunk, and spread far round. At top they unite in a very respectable crown, unless the frost prevents its development. The bark is smooth and dull in colour. This, as well as the sharply fragrant, lengthwise-divided leaf, accords perfectly with the extreme watery nature of the tree; which is indissolubly united, in our boyish reminiscences, with the village school and schoolmaster. The tight-fitting, firm husk, with its milky kernel, so enticingly

hung out, and so cleverly made booty of,—these are sunny moments in youthful life ; and we do not well comprehend what moved our ancestors to dedicate this blessed dispenser of fruit to Night and her dark followers.\* The Walnut, according to the belief of our forefathers, places itself opposite the Oak,—the tree consecrated to the God of Day and of Lightning : the two cannot stand beside each other without being destroyed, just as the black and white thorn have cherished mortal hatred since time immemorial. Thus the hereditary enmity of Ormuzd and Ahriman has also penetrated into the vegetable world. When, on the other hand, the Walnut appears in mediæval allegories as the symbol of a new creation, a more pleasing meaning is conveyed. It is the kernel out of which benumbed life continually springs up anew ; in the green egg lies the pledge of a fresh increase.

We pass over the Fruit-trees : the very name implies that their importance consists, not in themselves, but rather in the fruit. To it indeed they sacrifice beauty and size, so rare it is that the useful and the beautiful combine. These trees therefore cannot afford matter for æsthetical consideration ; and it is only exceptionally that painters employ them as accessories. The circumstance that we never see them in a state of natural freedom, contributes much to the sober impression which they produce. Snatched

\* In former times there stood at Rome, in the square before the Church del Popolo, a walnut-tree with dense foliage, among whose branches evil spirits had their abode. Pope Paschal II. laid the tree under a ban ; the tree was felled, and the church built there by the people.



away from the poetry of field and wood, they stand, as man's servant and nourisher, within the pale of his garden, by his art "trained" and "schooled." But, setting this aside, the form and growth of the Fruit-trees is really the most unsightly of all. Without a powerful trunk, devoid of striking height, and with no picturesque interlacing of the branches, they resemble so much mere wooden framework; nor is the dull greyish-green foliage at all calculated to enliven them.

Only the Pear and Apple tree prove sometimes an exception. The first usually assumes more often an important size; its leaves have a fresher brightness, the boughs close in and form a rounded top. At the same time it is the only fruit-tree which here and there is found scattered wild. Then it rises from the corn-field in mighty stature: unlike that traditionary Pear-tree in the Walser-field, which, when it shall blossom again, proclaims the Day of Judgement to be at hand, this one tells only of the peaceful blessings of agriculture. It is the well-known spot where the reapers and the old men assemble, as Goethe, in his poem of 'Hermann and Dorothea,' has so pleasingly described. The Apple-tree is lower, and spreads out its boughs in flatter layers, forming a sloping roof. We recognize at once the provident care with which it thus presents the fruit, so much in need of sun, to the ripening beam. It is a necessary accompaniment to the straw-thatched roof of the cottager, the orchard, and the high-road.

The only charm which the fruit-trees have to offer is

their blossom. What would May be without them? What a surprise when in a single night the Peach comes forth, all its branches glittering, like a purple wonder of Spring! How the fragrant, snowy bloom of the Cherry-tree beams with light! Not a single green spot is to be discovered in the whole luxuriant fulness of the blossoms. What a rosy light is hovering round the Apple-tree, through whose branches the bees are humming! How lovely when, wafted by the breeze, thousands of leaflets fall whirling to the ground!—so many tiny drinking-cups, out of which the thirsty chafers may sip the dew.

The charm which the vernal renovation possesses shows itself here in all its force; and the feelings, like the tree, bud forth anew. But yet, with all this, the frailty and diminutiveness of such ornament prevent it having any importance when viewed æsthetically or as a mark of character. Who would ever think of painting trees in blossom? It must look dotted, and like a mere toying with the work.

With fruits it is the same. The circular globe of the Apple, the honey-bell on the Pear-tree, the down-covered Apricot swelling with juice, all the gifts of Pomona do but hang from the branches like so many painted ornaments on a Christmas-tree. They smile and beckon with their rosy cheeks to the boy, who climbs after them; to the wayfarer, who reaches up to them as he passes; and to the waggoner, in whose very lap they lay themselves while driving by. It is the enjoyment of them which is their charm. Or who, when lying in the shade on a

warm day he sees suddenly the ripe fruit quietly bending over him, does not think of gathering and eating?

“ Verse on roses may be written,  
But the apple must be *bitten*.”

The charm of colour too, which delights us in fruit, is little else than a sensuous one. If there be another, deeper feeling, it can only be one of admiration and gratitude,—a feeling which is awakened in all sensitive minds by the abundance of Nature’s gifts. Uhland’s poem on the Apple-tree expresses this sentiment in a hearty, tender manner, without the poet being led to praise the tree for its beauty. In his eyes it is a benign and liberal *host*, refreshing those who are hungry and athirst: nothing more than this; and thus, it seems to me, fruit-trees in general should be viewed. Their allotted task is “to bear.”

## II.

### SKETCHES OF CHARACTER.

#### Birds.

AMONG the various races of the animal creation, Birds especially have, from earliest time, excited the attention and admiration of man. In long-past days songs were chanted to the Lark, the Stork, and the Nightingale; and from the mouth of the people a thousand familiar rhymes greet them on their path as they pass by on their wanderings. Spring even were mournful without birds, just as Winter is rendered more desolate and dismal by their departure. It is true the organization of the mammalia is more perfect, and their mental parts have a greater development. Plastic nature has perhaps produced nothing, except man, that is nobler than the horse, that “smelleth the battle afar off;” and assuredly the elephant and lion are grander, the greyhound and gazelle more elegant, animal forms than any bird whatever. It seems notwithstanding that the mammalia exhibit this perfection but in few individuals, many of them being decidedly not beautiful, and repulsive. Among the birds, on the contrary,



there is scarcely one which might be called ugly ; and with all their imperfection of organization, these winged inhabitants of the air are distinguished by certain peculiarities which must ensure them the interest of the gentle-minded observer. And this not only in as great a degree as he feels for the higher classes of animals, but occasionally even a still livelier sympathy.

The very nest of a bird, that soft bed hidden among green boughs, woven and watched over by careful affection, and with the songs of love floating around it,—what a unique picture ! What wonder of Nature is there more lovely and more appealing to the heart ? Towards the bird's nest the tender hearts and hands of children are naturally drawn ; and the grown-up man stands admiringly before it, feeling the while the warm breath of God, in which all created things live and move. And now the bird itself. What a light, aerial form ! How freely the head uplifts itself on the slender, quickly-moving neck ! how beautifully is the breast rounded, to meet the stream of cloud and wave ! How charming are the soft lines of the buoyantly-sailing Swan ! With what boldness and strength the Eagle plants himself on the tensely outstretched foot ! Add to this, the splendid colouring and exquisite drawing of the plumage with which Nature has so richly adorned her favourites ;—the chequered coverings, bands, and stripes ; the dots of changing hues, the eyes, the rings, and spots ; the metallic gleaming and play of blue and green and golden colours ; the shining pure freshness of their white and black feathers. Even the grey of the Crow is some-

thing more than that dull, colourless merging of all colours which the word grey is generally used to designate.

But what attracts us most, and that by which the birds are lifted beyond the sphere of every-day life, is the wondrous power of flying. To the simple child of Nature their flight has something supernatural. The happy birds, exclaims the poet,—

“ They dwell and rejoicingly play in the ne’er-changing house of the  
 Father :  
 For all there is room : the pathway of none is mark’d out, each goes  
 where he listeth,  
 And through the house freely they move, both the greater and also the  
 less ones.  
 Above they exult as they fly o’er my head, and my heart feels a  
 yearning,  
 A yearning to join them on high.”\*

But what abundance of full and loveliest movements are also here displayed ! The majestic circling and sailing ; the blissful, luxuriant floating and hovering in the air ; the rush and the fluttering of wings ; the swooping, the falling, the soaring ;—

“ Now below, where the stream is gushing,  
 Now on high, where the clouds are rushing ;  
 On the mountain, and then  
 Down in the glen ;”†—

it is, in truth, as though the spirits of the air were sporting around in ecstasy, and enjoying song and dance.

I pass over the migrations, the battles, and the wonderful instincts of birds, and merely mention their song. On

\* Hölderlin.

† Deinhardtstein.

all, it is true, a voice is not bestowed ; and as to song, there are but few who can boast of any ; but nevertheless it is this power, even more than that of flight, which raises them above all other animals.<sup>23)</sup> Song is the bird's mystery ;\* and in former times men understood these sounds,<sup>24)</sup> which often foretold them their own fate, and in which they heard a call exciting them to action, or a threatening voice announcing some near sorrow. We can hardly fancy to ourselves the free rovers of the air not endued with a voice. The dumb bird stands, as it were, without the pale of Nature ; it is always a lonesome, often a mournful sight. The different degrees which here present themselves are absolutely endless. What a world of tones lies between the hoarse cawing of the Raven and the song of the Nightingale ! How terrifying is the shrill cry of the Osprey as he swoops upon his prey ! how alluring the coo of the Wood-pigeon in the forest ! how comically the strutting Turkey gobbles his gibberish ! and what moving affection in the chirp of the Swallow watching over her nest ! And again, how manifold are the accents of a single bird's voice !—now prattling quickly, now soft and long drawn out : now rustling ; then fine, sharp, and with sudden stops : now low, or again shrill and disjointed :—thus it has the power to express the pleasurable feeling of content, the gloom of sorrow, the yearning of love, and the rage of jealousy,—every joy, in short, and every grief. Need I here allude

\* In the Middle Ages the song of birds was called their “Latin,” just as any foreign tongue which was not understood was termed “Latin” or “Wälsch.”

to the delight which the first greeting of the Lark awakens in us, or our start of pleasure when we hear the Nightingale?—That refreshing feeling which pervades the heart when, after cheerless days, the first sunbeam rouses this active people to new songs? It is clear: it is the birds which give a melodious voice to the fair face of Nature, and with it that indescribable charm which this most spiritual of all the powers of the body has never ceased to exercise over men.

Where such considerations are admitted, a justification may be found for attempting to characterize these animals in the sense above described. As a matter of course the natural-historical moment cannot nor should be overlooked; but it will serve rather as a foil to the æsthetical point of view; and I cannot but think this will be even more easy of attainment than was the case with the trees. For while to these it was first necessary to *lend* an existence, causing thus a certain uniformity, to overcome which my descriptive power was insufficient, in the case of the birds we have to do with *real life*,—one too in many instances very distinctly pronounced. Yet this task also has its limits. The very flight of birds, which gives their being so much of poetry, makes it impossible for him who will delineate them to follow, and to render the vanishing form in a well-defined picture. It is the same with the voice of the bird: the richer it is, the more difficult to translate. And indeed what music is there capable of being translated? How many birds are there, finally, whose form is lost in diminutiveness! they are effective only in masses,



and not singly ; while others have too great a family likeness, to be divided into separate classes.

Under these circumstances I have preferred confining myself to a small number of characteristic birds, beginning with our household species, to which I shall add some others, which, from neighbourhood or aught else, have a claim on our attention.

#### DOMESTIC BIRDS.

The first bird that man converted into a domestic animal was undoubtedly the common Fowl ; and the art of feeding and fattening it may be considered as one of the most pleasing gifts allotted to the inhabitants of Delos for their hospitality to Latona. Destined to walk upon the ground, harmlessly picking grains of corn and sociably seeking companionship, the race stands in a position similarly parallel to the ruminant animals, as that of the goose and duck to the pig. And like the useful race of cattle, the Fowl has everywhere followed man : a faithful but most prosaic creature, in whom all the romance of bird-nature, every reflex even of higher instinct, is entirely wanting. Weakness of intellect and subjection are the Fowl's nature : the very first glance tells you this. Madam Scrapefoot was indeed never celebrated for her wit. How often has Reynard overreached her sweet simplicity, and how unmercifully abused it ! And then her blindness to the daily infidelity of her lord and consort. How she loses all self-possession when but a child passes by her brood ! Confused, she rushes about, now dashing against the wall, and

now against a pile of wood. But it almost seems as if there were a connection between this limited understanding<sup>25</sup>) and her other qualities,—her good-nature, zeal, discipline, and even her self-satisfied loquacity.

The Fowl race represents, as it were, the inferior *bourgeoisie*; and the Hen, reared in the confined, strict notions of her class, never forgets for a moment the limits nor the duties of her station. Her sober mind abhors all innovation and extravagance. She will have nothing to do with those doubtful virtues which we proudly call elegance, refinement, high-breeding, or which we at once sum up in the term “polite education.” The fantastical wanderings, the buoyant rocking in mid-air, the art of song and nest-building, which the world admires in other birds, are to her as naught. As her ancestors were before her, will she remain; and like her dress, so in thought and deed, is she plain and citizen-like. “Pray and work! Stay at home and get an honest livelihood!” is what she exclaims to her sons and daughters, amidst whom she walks with a high sense of her importance. She tells them of her own peaceful existence, of her young and her old days; and flinging a precept to one and a caress to another, she nods her well-frizzled top-knot with discreet gravity. She is like one of those respectable country cousins of whom we have scarcely any knowledge except from novels, and who with her narrow-mindedness has also preserved the faithful industry, simplicity, and modest contentment of the good old times: a trusty housewife and exemplary mother of a family.

With the dawn her cares begin, and when the sun departs she can mount to her chaste perch with a quiet conscience. No "DIEM PERDIDI!" disturbs the rest of the just one. How self-satisfied, how emphatically she clucks when she has laid an egg!\* No young poet could exhibit his 'Collected Poems' with more vain-gloriousness,—no spider the work of her many winter evenings. How joyfully she runs along when she has found a worm! And then, above all, when she is a mother, what a tripping about and searching, what scraping and calling!† She bruises each grain of corn for her little ones, and lays every crumb before the tiny bill. She provides for all; of herself alone she never thinks; and while her keen eye overlooks not the smallest worm, she is watchful against danger, and with anxious voice calls her giddy, dispersed family, the instant the kite threatens from above. And the young ones understand the language of their mother, and obey the call; and she hides them beneath her outspread wings, making of herself a shield and a vaulted roof which the beak of the destroyer attacks in vain. With what motherly fondness she loves the duckling that has been given her to hatch! She does not know that it is a strange, supposititious child. She leads it to the meadow, seeks food for it, and teaches it to scrape. But alas!

\* The Greeks term self-criticism, *κακκάζειν*.

† Latin, *gracillat, glocitat, singultit*. Sometimes the hen crows like a cock; and it is this perhaps to which Terence alludes (*Phormio*, iv. 4. 30) when he says, "*Gallina cecinit*;" and the bridegroom looks on it as an evil omen.

yonder a brook is purling, and the little yellow swimmer, without giving the least heed to the lesson, waddles rejoicing and eager to the congenial element ; and, attracted as he is by a magnetic influence, nothing can restrain him. He is already sporting in the waves. How the poor mother is terrified ! How she runs backwards and forwards on the bank ! She exhorts, she entreats, and now she cries for help.<sup>26</sup>) It is a touching feature, one of fairest humanity, in her unselfish character ; and we may well understand how, despite her humble position, both ancients and moderns have been unanimous in her praise. The grave Plutarch cites the Hen as a pattern of motherly love, and the Arabians even place her among the stars ;\* and we read in the Bible that Christ thought it not beneath Him to compare His love for His people to the love of a hen for her little ones. And truly, of all the figures in the New Testament, there is hardly one more touching, or that appeals more powerfully to the heart.

### The Cock.

Poorly as the Hen has been provided for, in all the greater glory does the Cock present himself, on which account he was a welcome object of popular tradition. His glowing hues and the fire of his eye made him in early times an object of veneration among the Germans. He is the symbol of flame, Lokis, the god of fire ; a bird

\* It is the seven-starred constellation of the Pleiades to which the Arabs gave the epithet of "Clucking-hen." The bright Alcyon is the hen, and the nebulous cluster of stars the chickens.



of fearful splendour : when he unfolds his wings for flight, flame rises up beneath him.\* The Romans, mindful of his prudence and courage, dedicated him to Mars and to Minerva ; and among the heroes of Greece who stood before Troy, Idomeneus bore him as a symbol on his shield, just as at the present day the Cock is the ensign of the most warlike of European nations. In ‘Reynard the Fox’ our stalwart comrade is seen amid the great dignitaries of the Empire : a solemn requiem is being held for his murdered daughter, at which the whole Diet is present. Indeed the Cock generally plays a prominent part in all legends of animals. The departing mediæval age celebrated him in learned Latin poems ;<sup>27</sup>) and after a temporary forgetfulness, old recollections of the glory of his race thronged together, towards the beginning of the last century, in the song of ‘Henning the Cock.’† But it died away like a faint echo, until lately Brentano’s well-known tale flung new splendour round Chanticleer’s memory.

The high-mindedness of the Cock is shown in his rich dress.

“ Gold-cock is a proud knight-errant ;  
 Orange-colour’d is his vest,  
 Green the plumes so brightly waving,  
 Gold the cuirass on his breast.

\* Hence the saying, in use to this day : “Einem den rothen Hahn auf’s Dach setzen.” (To set fire to the house of another : literally, “to set the red cock on his roof.”)

† This poem appeared first in 1732 as an ancient work. It is however evidently a very feeble production of the editor, Caspar Frederic Renner, Provost of Bremen.

But the hen esteems most highly  
 Comb of crimson on the head,  
 On the heel the spur for battle,  
 Boldly curved, and sharp, and dread."<sup>28</sup>)

His chest is vaulted like a breastplate, his beard glows like fire, his eye beams with courage, and his gait is full of dignity. "There be three things," says Solomon,\* "which go well, yea, four are comely in going: a lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away from any; a cock; an he-goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up." Verily the Cock is born to govern, and he is every inch of him a king. He is the prince of birds. Slowly and with measured step he raises one foot and then the other; oftentimes pausing in the middle of a step, and casting his eye attentively around, that nothing may escape him.† If he goeth under an archway, through which a rider might pass, he still bends his head lest he spoil the adornment of his comb; so sensible is he of inner greatness. Whether he moves or is at rest, all displays nobility of manner. With how thoughtful an air he raises his experienced eye to the cloud-covered windows of the firmament, or to the lonely, pale lunar hieroglyphic in the bright morning sky! But he is most of all superb

\* Proverbs xxx. 30, 31. I follow here the Septuagint and the Arabic and Chaldean versions. Luther has put the "cock" instead of the "greyhound:" whence this variation, see Michaelis's Commentaries on the Psalms.

† Pliny's description is very fine (Hist. Nat. x. 24): "*Æque superba graditur ardua cervice, cristis celsa: cœlumque sola volucrum adspicit crebro, in sublime caudam quoque falcata erigens, itaque terrori sunt etiam leonibus ferarum generosissimis.*"







when he is preparing to sing after the manner of his fathers. He flies on the roof, the right foot is placed in advance of the left, which remains half drawn up. This is the heroic step, the real rhetorician attitude. His whole frame assumes a more exalted expression; the neck and the feathers of the tail become erect, the breast swells, the wings clash loudly together, the eye half-closes in ecstasy. Thus, with the pathos and grace, and with all the enraptured enjoyment of the genuine virtuoso, does Chanticleer lift up his clear defiant voice.

But we must be grave in speaking of serious themes. It is in the chant of the Cock that his mission\* lies; his song it is which proves above all his high descent;† and in truth Herod Agrippa did himself not less honour than the Cock, when he sent the bird that greeted him gaily on a journey at night the most costly gifts.‡ The pagan Greeks and Romans had a foreboding that in his nature was something divine;<sup>29)</sup> Mahomet commanded homage to be shown him, as the sentinel that arouses the hosts of heaven to their service;<sup>30)</sup> and we may well ask with Job,§ “Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts, and who hath given understanding to the cock?” His cry soundeth afar like clanging metal. The evil demons of

\* Hence, in Horace, “Excubitor ales;” and in Pliny, “Nostri vigilēs nocturni, quos excitandis in opera mortalibus rumpendoque somno natura genuit.”

† “Quid in mentem venit Callistheni,” exclaims the sober-minded Cicero (de Div. ii.), “dicere, deos gallis signum dedisse cantandi?”

‡ Bochart, Hieroz.

§ Job xxxviii. 36, according to the Septuagint.

night fly before it : \* the seaman hears it on the waves, and the wayfarer on the solitary path, and joy enters into their heart, for it bears witness to the cheering neighbourhood of man. It wakens the student to early study, and the recluse to prayer ; it scares the evil-doer, calls the sinner to repentance, announces to the husbandman the refreshing gift of rain, and to the sufferer on his bed the glad return of morning. When Orion goes forth on his rounds, and the dew is still hanging in pearl-drops on the wings of the other birds, he is already on the move, and lets his rejoicing notes be heard. Verily the Cock is a messenger of blessing, and he can never be lauded enough. His call rends asunder the golden deceptions of sleep, and rouses the slothful limbs to work, conflict, and victory.

For this reason, no animal has been so feared, none so exalted. The pious architect placed his likeness high up on the pinnacle of the church-tower above the cross, in order that the watchman there might have near him the giver of warning and the alarum ; † and wise teachers put it for an ornament on the cover of the horn-book, as a warning to youth that he who seeks after good must begin betimes. But the soldier placed him on the ram-

\* Prudentius says,—

“ Ferunt vagantes dæmones  
Lætos tenebris noctium  
Gallo canente exterritos  
Sparsim timere et cedere.”

† Gregory the Great : “ Speculator semper in altitudine stat, ut quidquid venturum sit longe prospiciat.”

parts, that he might call to and relieve him at the right hour when on guard. And that is the Cock's most honourable position: that is his fitting place. For he is himself a warrior; valiant, prudent, enterprising, enduring, and watchful of his honour, like no other animal.<sup>31)</sup> If another Cock invades his territory, he goes forth to meet him, claps his wings, and charges down upon him. His comb swells, the feathers of his neck are put up like a shield, his eyes dart fire, and with a mighty leap he endeavours to hurl his adversary to the earth and to trample upon him. The battle is long and obstinate. If one retreats, it is merely a pretence; and the combat is renewed with all the greater impetuosity. At last both feet and wings are disabled; and then they have recourse to the last and most dreadful weapon. The blows of the sharp beak descend as thick as hail, and blood is soon seen dropping from their head and neck. Finally the courage of the foe forsakes him; he staggers, retreats, flies; he lowers his tail, slinks to a corner, and screams out for mercy. But the victor is not to be deceived: he shakes his wings and makes ready for the pursuit of the foe, whose safety alone consists in the quickest flight. The battle is decided.<sup>32)</sup> Chanticleer springs upon the wall, and bleeding, yet drawing himself proudly up, proclaims his victory, like a herald, by loud blast of trumpet.\* Who then can wonder if the Indian, the Chinese, and the Briton should take delight in beholding such a fierce tournament,† and that the warlike minds

\* "Exultat voce," says Cardan.

† See Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 25. As such, from their birth, the fighting-cocks of Tanagra and Rhodes were held in high estimation.

of the ancients feasted on and were enkindled by the valour of the Cock? Does not Ælian<sup>33</sup>) relate how once Themistocles re-animated the sinking courage of his army, by pointing out to them two Cocks? "Look," said he, "these animals stake their lives for the mere sake of victory, and will not give way; but ye are struggling for your hearths and for your gods, for the graves of your forefathers and for the cradles of your children, but above all for freedom—and ye would despair?" Hereupon the Greeks took courage, and were victorious over the barbarians.

But in war even, war is not the ultimate aim. And it is thus with the Cock; he only battles for the sake of peace and for supremacy. He is an absolute ruler,\* and yet a peace-loving patriarch rather than a suspicious tyrant: a sultan over many wives, proud, imperious, yet not impervious to gentler sentiments. In the courtyard, surrounded by his *sérail*, he is the picture of a careful spouse. He cares for and satisfies all: not one of his wives is neglected, even though he distinguishes the favourite. With cunning words he woos for favours. Rabbi Jochanan says:—"Had the Law never been given us, we might still have learned politeness from the cock, who is fair spoken with the female in order to win her." "I will buy thee a dress," he whispers in the hen's ear; "a dress that shall reach down to the very ground." And when the victory is achieved, he shakes his head solemnly and cries, "May

\* Pliny: "Imperitant suo generi, et regnum in quacunq[ue] sunt domo exercent."



my comb perish, if, when I have the means, I do not keep my word!" Selfishness is foreign to the Cock's nature. Should he find a dainty morsel, he calls with loud voice to all belonging to him, for he shares with them the smallest portion; but not one of the assembled people dare touch even a grain, until he has opened the banquet; no one with indiscreet forwardness begin a table-talk.<sup>34</sup>) It is the same severe domestic discipline as among our forefathers. A look merely from this ruler over women, and it is enough to recall the hen to her duty when about to disobey his commands. And this, in truth, may not be reckoned as the least of his virtues. The sage Vridank says truly:—

So stolzen muot nie man getruoc,  
 Ern hete an einem weibe genuoc:  
 So wilz der hane bezzer han,  
 Dem sint zwelf hennen undertan.  
 Daz er der zwelfer meister ist,  
 Daz gat vür Salamoness list.<sup>35</sup>)

And Petrus Alfonsi, in his 'Disciplina Clericalis,' soberly gives warning: "Fili, ne sit gallus fortior te, qui decem\* uxores suas justificat, tu autem solam non potes castigare."

All honour then to the Cock for his good example. Seven virtues belonged to the good knight and true, seven also are possessed by the perfect Cock: he is pru-

\* The number twelve is, according to the preceding quotations, the prevailing one. Columella, on the other hand, for dietetical reasons, will allow only five wives. It is also worthy of remark, that the name of the Cock is used typically, as it were—as abstract idea of virility—to distinguish the males among birds. We speak at least of cock-sparrows and cock-canaries.

dent, wise, valiant, honourable, gentle-mannered, full of love, and skilled in governing.

Among the fowls the Turkey and the Peacock are still to be mentioned ; two high-bred birds and emigrants, in whose dress the foreigner is at once discernible, and who in exile have resigned the freedom they formerly enjoyed.

### The Turkey.

The Turkey migrated to Europe from the West in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and paraded for the first time at the wedding-feast of Charles IX. of France,\* in the year 1570. Such is the unauthenticated account given by our cooks and epicures, for whom the appearance of the Turkey must have formed an epoch ; not only because he altogether affords a perfect fulness of enjoyment, but also because, according to Antonius Anthus, the different parts offer a most exquisite variety of taste. He is the national bird of America, the ornament of the virgin forests of Louisiana, and the harbinger of morning to the dweller in the solitary blockhouse. On the topmost boughs of the cypress and magnolia the social bird in large flocks greets the early dawn, and then the lofty woods resound for miles with their cry. In his own country the Turkey is a stately animal, greatly in request;† and well might Franklin me-

\* Gessner, as early as 1555, says that they belonged to the best of dishes, and adorned the tables of princes ; and the cookery book of Max Rumpolt (1501) seems to consider them as a generally-known delicacy.

† The old fat "gobblers" often weigh twenty-two or twenty-four pounds, and are the great dainty of the inhabitants of the Hinterwald.

ditate on placing him as armorial ensign on the banner of North America. He wished to have the inoffensive useful bird for the peaceful republic; while to our kingdoms, so proud of their civilization, he fain would leave the warlike symbol of the beasts of prey.\*

The Turkey has degenerated in Europe: the golden lustre of his dress has faded into dusky grey or a dirty white; grumbling and peevish, like a hypochondriacal, querulous old fellow, he struts about the court of the farmer, without deigning to cast a look on the mob of geese and ducklings. His dimmed dark eye is full of irritation, if it do not happen to be glowing with passion. To choler may be added haughtiness, for the Turkey is as puffed up with pride as a beggarly *nobile*. He will move on beside the wall, blowing, gobbling, and snorting; all his feathers are up on end, the tail spreads out its broad fan, and the puffed-out wings rustle gratingly on the ground. His bulk is swollen to deformity, he boils over with fury; the fleshy lumps hang low down upon his neck, the strange bristles of the neck stand erect, and above his bill there grows a most extraordinary scarlet nose, which drops over it like a red tassel. And what is it that dyes his face and neck with purple rage? Nothing whatever, except the spruce red apron of the farmer's wife yonder, or the innocent scarlet waistcoat of the master. The Turkey is an ultra Tory. Like the fierce buffalo, he hates the colour of the levelling party;

\* Franklin, it is said, gave up his first choice, and instead of the Turkey placed the stars on the American banner, when he was told that this bird was *puffed up* and *wanton*.

it is as though a dagger were thrust into his eyeballs; and the poor simpleton stamps, and growls, and fumes, till the revolutionary red be removed from his sight, or his impotent fury has exhausted itself. The Turkey is a comedian against his will; he bears malice, and we laugh.

Yet, with all his peevishness and irascibility, the Turkey is of a very amorous nature, and the obeisances with which he pays his addresses to the hen are amusing enough. Passion makes him completely blind; so that the American hunter always puts him into this state by imitating the cry of the hen, before he endeavours to approach. With the lappet on his nose puffed up, and with outspread tail, he struts about, and answers with a gobble to every noise he hears; whether it be the crowing of the farm-yard cock, the screech of the owl, the fall of a branch, or even the distant report of a gun. But scarcely has he a foreboding of danger, scarcely does he perceive the slightest suspicious movement, than, uttering a sharp piercing cry, he draws himself up and hastens with long strides into the thicket, where none can follow him.

### The Peacock.

The Peacock has almost a similar rank among poultry, as the swan among ducks and geese; and yet there can hardly be a greater difference than between the dull bird of Juno, and the finely-sensitive favourite of Apollo. How nobly dignified, how proudly simple, how antique, the one! and how fantastically vain, how gaudy and awkward, how modish, the other!



The Peacock is an Asiatic. The magnificence of his sparkling jewelled dress betrays at once the splendour-loving Oriental. On no other animal, on no other bird even, has Nature showered forth the abundance of her hues more lavishly;<sup>36)</sup> and when, wheel-shape, he unfolds the thousand dyes and intermingled glories of his tail, we understand how Chrysippus could say, "The poor bird is created only for the sake of his tail."\* Solomon's ships sought him in distant Ophir;† Alexander sent him to Greece as a gorgeous trophy of the Indian zone. In crowds, as to a spectacle, the Athenians thronged to gaze at this animal, which they had never yet beheld, and whose life Alexander protected by severe penalties against pursuit.‡ It was reserved for the over-refined luxury of Rome to bring the Peacock on the table as an ornamental dish,<sup>37)</sup> and to tickle the sated palate with delicacies made of his brain.§ This custom maintained itself throughout the Middle Ages, associated however with a peculiar symbolic meaning. The knights swore by the Peacock, and, in the performance of the vow, surpassed each other in the strangeness of their adventures. Thus, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks, the whole assembled knighthood at the Court of Philip the Good, swore by the Peacock to set out upon a Crusade.

\* Τὸ ζῶον γεγόνεαι ἔνεκα τοῦ κέρκου, καὶ οὐκ ἀναπάλιν.

† 1 Kings x. 22: "For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

‡ Athenæus, *Deipnosoph.* xiii. cap. 30. *Ælian*, *Hist. An.* v. cap. 21.

§ This invention is owing, according to Suetonius, to a mad freak of Heliogabalus.

The vanity of the Peacock has become proverbial.\* Should a word of praise reach his ear, or the hen show herself in his neighbourhood, in a moment the flowery wheel is unfolded, he stretches his glittering neck, and utters a displeasing cat-like cry;† while, on the other hand, he retires from the sight of the indifferent observer, and in the moulting season withdrawing into solitude to hide his nakedness.<sup>38</sup>) He is incapable of strong passion; but the foolish haughtiness of the turkey is also unknown to him. To be really beautiful he is wanting in one quality, and that is an expression of sagacity. Moreover the bald head and the white rings round the eyes are no ornaments, any more than the short, dirty-coloured foot. His flight is a mere fluttering, that raises him but very little above the ground; yet he likes to perch on a neighbouring roof, ladder, or some other lofty spot, in order to show himself to advantage and be admired. The size of the body and the heavy tail oblige the Peacock to maintain a slow, uncertain pace, which is augmented by the balancing, downward motion of the outstretched neck. Buffon, his eloquent panegyrist, finds grace and majesty herein; but our mediæval poetry, which terms the Peacock's step "creeping," and compares it to the proud gait of the crane,<sup>39</sup>) is certainly much nearer the truth.

The cat-like nature of the Peacock shows itself in later years; he gets quarrelsome and ill-humoured;‡ a fea-

\* Ovid. Met. lib. xiii.: "Laudato pavone superbior."

† Varro de Ling. Lat. lib. iv.: "Volucres pleræque a suis vocibus appellatæ, ut hæ: upupa, ulula, pavo."

‡ Pliny (Hist. Nat. x. 22) calls him "malevolus."

ture, by the bye, which not in Peacocks only is observed to attend vanity when growing old.

### The Goose.

The taming, which has decidedly raised some animals to a higher state of intelligence, has effected quite the contrary with the Goose.<sup>40</sup>) The wild Goose is a pattern of sagacity: it must be content with the grasses, snails, fish, grains, berries, etc., which it finds in the open fields,—in short, with whatsoever niggard Winter has left behind,—and to travel from stream to stream in quick flight, through darkness and frost. The domestic Goose, on the contrary, living solely on potatoes and nourishing corn food, and transformed into a quiet household and pasturage animal, has become the archetype of stupidity. Its fate is like that of the sheep. Even the dull, patient sheep is, in the natural freedom of its rocks and mountains, one of the most cunning and untractable creatures; as, for example, the Mouflon of Corsica. With these animals all depends on their freedom: in servitude they lose their natural demeanour and energy; the flashing ardour of liberty and nature is extinguished in the imbecility of subjection.

Thus it is with the Goose. She has become a slave; but all that is tragical in such a situation is here turned into comedy, on account of the inevitable contradiction between the animal's instincts and disposition, and that change which man has exacted. The Goose is a cavalry

soldier on foot, a swimmer upon land. Not for one single moment does that heavy body, snatched from its native element, find its original equilibrium: all centre of gravity is lost. On broad, oar-like feet<sup>41)</sup> she trails along her clumsy body, grown fat in captivity, at every step rocking on one side or half tumbling forwards;\* the neck alone is stretched out stiffly, and the eyes stare stupidly right before them. If you drive her, she never knows whither to go; now turning hesitatingly to the right, and now to the left, always at a loss, always cackling. If you drive her more quickly, the noise becomes a confused, shrill scream;† the bewildered animal spreads out its wings, beats them violently together, without however rising an inch above the ground;‡ for long disuse has weakened the strength of its pinions. This ceaseless cackle, which is yet capable of certain modulations,<sup>42)</sup> caused the Romans to make the Goose symbolical of a chatterer; and yet it was this very screeching which obtained for her historical fame and veneration. From Livy, who so loved to weave traditions, and on through all succeeding ages, the preservation of the Capitol by the warning cries of geese is related as a miracle, and an opportunity taken for bringing to light the virtues of this animal. The vigilance of the Goose was raised above the oft-praised watchfulness

\* For this reason the goose is called "Wiggle-waggle-tail" (Wackel-schwänzlein) in the nursery rhymes.

† "Vox arguta," Martial. "Anser argutus," Virgil.

‡ Although all power and security are wanting in this painfully-difficult motion, still Pliny praises highly the perseverance of the flocks of geese wandering from the mountains down to Rome.







of the dog ; in a public annual festival, grateful Rome celebrated the remembrance of the preservatory deed ; and even such sober, practical men as Columella and Vegetius recommended the Goose as the safest sentinel in farm-yard and camp.<sup>43)</sup> Lucretius and Isidorus attribute the celebrated act to the fine sense of smell which the Goose possesses ; but this can in nowise detract from her fame ; on the contrary, it but calls our attention to an additional attribute of the Goose family.

The Goose can also give proofs of courage : its original nature is not wholly obliterated, as is the case with the Mouflon. She stretches out her lengthy neck, and hisses furiously at the boy or dog that dares approach her brood ; and the kite, ay even the fox, is often made to suffer for his rapacity in combats with the Gander. Geese also wage war among themselves : the battles they fight on the common are severe enough, and days often pass before the trumpeter of the vanquished party gives the signal for retreat. Thus it will be seen that the phlegmatic nature of the Goose hides many a noble quality, which may attract the attention of the simple-minded.

It has already been stated how great a value the ancient Romans set upon this fowl ; the Germans, too, often selected it for sacrifice, and the Middle Ages dedicated it even to St. Martin. But in this last instance, a doubt arises as to whether it was respect for the pious Bishop, or a discreet regard for their own stomachs, which suggested such consideration to the worthy monks.<sup>44)</sup> At least, old carols <sup>45)</sup> assert that on the feast of St. Martin, the Goose

is most in season; and the merry "Goose Litany," in Melchior Frank's 'Convivium,' which doubtless first re-echoed in a monastic refectory,<sup>46)</sup> strengthens the above doubt. In Germany, its original home, the breed of this bird was in early times zealously encouraged: here were found, if not divine, at least most high and noble, Goose-herds,—Hans von Schweinichen, for example, who was entrusted with the care of the whole paternal flock. Pliny asserts that an attribute of higher sagacity exists in the Goose, and quotes as proof the friendship which the philosopher Lacys<sup>47)</sup> formed for a Goose. But a more brilliant proof is found in the story of the Crusader, who, having lost his way in the desert, gave himself up to the guidance of a Goose, and thus found the way to the Holy City. The luxurious can only speak of its down, its fat, and its liver; and it cannot be denied that the invention of goose-liver paste appears of such moment to Pliny, that he deemed it worth while to search for the name of him to whom the epicures of his own and all succeeding ages owe this exquisite delicacy. He relates further, that even the sturdy necks of Roman men were unable to do without the soft down, and that the legions stationed in Germany deserted in multitudes to hunt the bird of their desires. This certainly is also a sort of worship; and as Charles V. deemed it not beneath his imperial dignity to enjoy, in grateful emotion, a bloater on the grave of the Dutchman who first smoked a herring, so too were it a praiseworthy act if, to the advancement of science, the admirers and consumers of goose-liver



pasties had resolved the important question propounded by Pliny.

But we who, with envious scoffing, have been termed children of a scribbling age, rise above such material considerations, and gaze at the bird who, become proverbial for stupidity,<sup>48)</sup> affords to learning the only means of safely depositing her treasures, and faithfully transmitting them to posterity. Where even the warrior's fame, if the goose did not furnish the historian with the inspired quill? When could a heart refresh itself with the poet's song, if the pen did not offer the magic wand, to retain the transient sounds, and those forms which fancy had called forth? Who would undertake to mark more distinctly the doubtful boundary-line of mine and thine, if above the sharp-edged sword the still sharper pen did not keep watch and ward? Who, finally, could indite thy praise, O most honoured bird, if thou hadst not resolved to die, in order to live on for ever in the memory of man?

### The Swan.

Beside the goose, we find her stiller, graver brother, the Swan. He is a water-fowl in the highest perfection, an ideal creation of nature: in him all is beautiful, dignified, and full of majesty. Poetic tradition early took possession of the Swan;<sup>49)</sup> the bards of all nations have glorified him; and should they wish to give an image of themselves, they can find no nobler one than he, the melodious bird of Apollo.\*

\* I refer to the inspired vision of Horace (Ode ii. 20), and to the

Proudly and slow he swims through the lake in the evening stillness. No leaf, no wave is moving: the Swan alone goes on his solitary course as though a bright water-spirit silently floated along; now suddenly vanishing in the depth, now emerging again in renewed splendour. How dazzlingly his snowy whiteness shines!<sup>50</sup> how majestically the undulating neck rises and bends! with what lightness and freedom he moves buoyantly away, the pinions unfurled like sails! Each outline melts into the other; every attitude is full of feeling; in every movement is nobility: an ever-changing play of graceful flowing lines, as though he knew that the very stream tarried to contemplate his beauty.

Thus, according to the profound tradition of the North, he moves in circles on the Urdarborn, the holy stream of Time, overshadowed by the branches of Ygdrasil, the tree of the universe. So also, according to the Roman poet, does he lead the car of the sea-born goddess over the waves.\* Thus, finally, are we enabled to comprehend that laughing, intellectual mythology which gave this bird as father to the loveliest of mortals; and that expression too of the German poem which, to express the Valkyr-like beauty of Brunhild, says concisely, "She resembled a swan upon the wave."†

Not less imposing than his swimming is the Swan's

assertion of Aristotle, that the souls of poets, after death, pass into swans, and retain the gift of harmony which they possessed in their human form.

\* See Horace, Ode iii. 28.

† Grimm, Mythol.

flight: he cleaves the air like a hero and an eagle,\* and a chorus of these birds resounding from on high is like trumpets heard from afar, or a peal of bells whose echoes are borne away on the breeze. This is the song of the Swan; partly a battle-cry, and in part a psalm of peace. But he loves peace more than strife. "Lions and tigers may rule on earth, eagles and vultures in the air, by war and cruelty alone; but the Swan reigns paramount on the waters by his size, his majesty, and gentleness. The others may be bloody tyrants, but he is a prince of peace,<sup>51)</sup> the first citizen of a calm republic;" sufficiently fond of quiet never to seek dissension, and strong enough never to fly from the encounter. Fearlessly he awaits the attack of the eagle, and his courage and strength give him also the victory over the lurking cunning of the fox; even over the iron gripe of the wolf, whom he drags down with him into the water and holds there.† The image is therefore a fine one, when Homer compares the Greeks,‡ leaving their ships and rushing to the battle, to

"The milk-white swans in Asius' watery plains,  
That o'er the windings of Cäyster's springs  
Stretch their long necks, and clap their rustling wings;  
Now tower aloft, now course in airy rounds;  
Now light with noise; with noise the field resounds."||

But still more beautiful, meseems, is the German myth,§ that Swans soar over and around the heads of the heroes,

\* Hence, in Hesiod (Scut. Herc. 310): ἀεσπιόνης.

† Aristot. Hist. An. ix. 2. 16. Oppian says the same.

‡ Hom. Il. ii. 462.

§ Grimm, Mythol.

|| Pope's Homer.

singing to them, as though Walhalla summoned them to immortality.<sup>52</sup>)

At the approach of death, the Swan pours forth his last breath in sublime and enchanting music.\* This, truly, is mere fable; but it is the most deeply significant of any of antiquity, which in this bird shadowed forth a presentiment of a Psyche, or soul; and thus created an image of that "vivifying power which is borne towards us from the gates of death."<sup>53</sup>)

### The Duck.

The Duck<sup>54</sup>) cannot be passed over in total silence, for even in the popular rhyme it is said,

"The Duck may boast  
That she rules the roast."

She has some resemblance to the goose, and her gait is even more awkward; yet she is not such a displeasing apparition. We do not find here the same stupid formality as in her neighbour: her outlines are rounder, the colours fresher and more various, her whole being denoting greater activity. The croup broad, with a becoming tail; a well-proportioned neck; the head flat, long, and narrow; the cheeks somewhat swelling, and the small Calmuck-looking eyes partly hidden in them; the physiognomy terminates finally in that broad spoon which is the hereditary portion of the Duck.

\* Aristot. Hist. An. x. 12; also Ælian and the old poets, almost without exception; among the moderns, I may name Herder. See his 'Dying Swan.'



In the neighbourhood of Cologne, there is, as I am told, an old rhyme about three Ducks,<sup>55)</sup> in which two of them express their astonishment at the unnatural mouthpiece of the third; much as if two persons with very long noses were ridiculing another with the same peculiarity.

“Three Ducks swam down a brook :  
 The first, Gammer Quax,  
 The second, Gammer Prax,  
 The third, Gammer Girvy Gax.  
 Then said Gammer Prax  
 To Gammer Girvy Gax,  
 ‘Oh look !  
 What a fright of a bill !  
 It makes me quite ill :  
 Poor Gammer Quax !’”

This is the mockery of self-delusion. For this very bill is a probe, filter, nose, weapon, and trumpet, all in one ; a real work of art, that Nature has produced, whose operations Paley<sup>56)</sup> cannot describe without connecting therewith remarks on the admirable contrivances of divine wisdom. In accordance with the construction of the bill, the Duck's voice is broad and grating ;\* Pythagoras was of opinion there was nothing disturbed so much the calm reflection of the philosopher ; while Buffon terms it, on the contrary, the clarionet of the bird-orchestra.

What gives a particularly comic look to the Duck, is the waddling gait, with the toes turned inward ; while the weight of the body causes it to fall awkwardly from side to side, as if a foot were by turns too short ; a walk which

\* In Latin, *tetrinit*, *restissicat*, *recrissat*.

sailors, and, it is said, women also, sometimes have. But they occasionally exhibit the strangest tricks and behaviour. There they stand upon a dung-heap: they form a circle, yawn at each other, stretch their wings, shake themselves, and then turn and bend their head to the right and left; each one observing the rules of the droll ceremony. Suddenly the spirit moves the Drake, and he bursts out in a loud cry, which is then answered by a single shrill tone from all the rest. They soon are silent again, squat upon the earth, hide their heads beneath their wings, and sleep; an operation which the more talented among them perform on one leg.

The greediness with which the Duck grubs about in the dirt reminds us of the swine; still it is fonder of cleanliness than the snouted animal. When rain is approaching, Ducks grow restless; they quack incessantly; and should they be in the water, they present, while chasing each other, flying,\* diving, or swimming, a most animated picture; particularly the spruce mallard.† The handsome plumage‡ befits his manly dignity. Around the velvet-green neck he wears, as befits a cavalier, a ribbon of pure white; the breast is clad in sober brown, the grey wings are covered with a bluish shield, and behind, at the extremity, are two feathers daintily curled, and standing up like two notes of interrogation. He is a man, every

\* About their flight, see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 54.

† In the Altmark, the Drake is called "Wänak" or "Drak." In 'Reineke Fuchs,' the Duck is named "Tibbeke" (Tabitha).

‡ Auson. *Epist.* iii. : "Iricolor vario pinxit quas pluma colore  
Collum columbis æmulas."

inch of him; and, like the cock, violent in his love and wrath. Most fitting therefore are the words of Shakespeare,\* when it is said of Anthony, as, blinded by love, he follows the fugitive Cleopatra:—

“ Claps on his sea-wing, and, like a doting mallard,  
Leaving the fight in height, flies after her.”

The mallard's rage is more dangerous than the imbecile ire of the goose. In the foam of his saliva there lurks a dangerous, nay a deadly poison. Indeed the Duck is altogether a more intellectual animal than her cackling cousin: she has retained more of her original wild nature.

### The Pigeon.

Of all winged animals the most pleasing is certainly the Pigeon. With Pigeons children like best to play, especially girls, who are themselves like Doves; and every pure mind takes pleasure in them. Even the frigid Romans condescended to amuse themselves with these birds, and Pliny† gives us accounts of contemporaries who spent large sums upon them. They had veritable pigeon towers, and kept an exact pedigree of their favourites, for a single one of which several hundred denarii would be paid. Too much weight however must not be laid on this, as it is a question whe-

\* Anthony and Cleopatra, act iii. scene 8.

† Hist. Nat. x. 53: “Et harum amore insaniant multi.” In Venice, at the present day, thousands of Pigeons are fed at the expense of the city. The surprised stranger is pleased to see the busy throng of these birds on the Place of St. Mark, and maybe to strew some crumbs for them too.

ther the practice arose from genuine natural feeling, or was only the result of fashion.

The whole life and being of the Dove is a pleasing idyl. They are chaste,\* gentle, unsuspecting, full of tender affection,† and deserve above all others the epithet of “the pious birds.” Without guile, like Doves, it is said in the Bible. Without guile, and free from anger, suffering all, even death, and not once uttering a cry of pain, what other animal may be compared to them? The Dove alone, according to the ancients, is destitute of gall;‡ and in a hundred popular rhymes and love-songs, as well as in the metaphors of the mediæval wandering preachers, the praise of her innocence resounds. And then, too, the Dove of Noah, the messenger of peace: what a lovely picture, as she flies over the rushing waters, in her beak the olive-branch of reconciliation, alighting with it on the Ark, that carries within the young hopes of the earth!

Yes, it is a dear and beautiful bird. It courts man’s neighbourhood, and is yet free: its plumage is always clean, the colours delicate, and often shining;<sup>57)</sup> every movement is pretty, and, in its flight, betokening gladness and enjoy-

\* Pliny: “Pudicitia illis prima virtus: neutri nota adulteria. Conjugii fidem non violant communemque servant domum.” “Custus turtur,” in Auctor Philom. This virtue of the Pigeon is often alluded to by the Fathers in their homilies.

† Hence, an image of lovers. Prop. Eleg. ii. 12. 27: “Exemplo junctæ tibi sint in amore columbæ.”

‡ Passages from the Fathers, in Bochart Hieroz. In a like sense the Dove is named *placida* by Ovid. The like pre-eminence is also attributed to the roe by Pliny (Hist. Nat. xi. 74).



ment. One wears a coquettish cap ; another, a wig, or a ruff, or a ribbon ; this one drums, that one makes a tit-tering noise, while a third turns topsy-turvy in the air. How daintily yonder little befringed foot trips over the white sand ! how full of sagaciousness and curiosity the red eye\* looks wooingly around ! and with what yearning she coos from the foliage of the green bower !<sup>58</sup>) Now she flies upon the roof, where the cock-pigeon awaits her, and receives her with tender caresses. The Pigeon is vain, there is no denying it ; and charmingly as this vanity becomes her, it is still dangerous when the hawk watches her dallyings from the leafy thicket, and pounces upon her while lost in self-contemplation. “*Nosse credas suos colores varietatemque dispositam. At speculatur occultus fronde latro et gaudentem in ipsa gloria rapit.*” So says Pliny. Is he in error ? The venerable Fathers of the Church give a different account. They are of opinion that the Dove seeks out the tree beside the water, and seats herself in its green dome in order to see the shadow of the robber soaring above her<sup>59</sup>) : though not correcter, at least more ingenious.

She cherishes her consort with affection, and tends her young with unwearied love. She softens each grain for them in her maw ; and when the timid fledgling leaves the dove-cot for the first time, she flutters round it on every side with watchful care. She is often the sacrifice of her love. It is touching to see how, during a fire, this faithful

\* In Solomon's Song, the love-darting eyes of the bride are often compared to those of the Dove.

creature will rush through the clouds of smoke and heat, and encircle the pigeon-house in despairing flights, till at last the flame has seized her pinions, and she reels downward into the blaze.

Quick and pleasing to behold is the flight of the Pigeon, the quickest of all birds; and this is its only protection against the hawk.<sup>60)</sup> When the bird of prey is soaring above the court, scarce discernible to human eye, the Pigeon has already perceived him; and, is no hiding-place to be found, the whole flock arise and career upwards in close circles. Faster, and still faster, the entangled maze goes round, in order to confuse the marauder. He swoops down and—misses his prey, for look and blow have grown uncertain. He makes another, and a third attempt, but in vain: there is nothing left him but to retreat discomfited. Often, it is true, the result is a different one.

It has been reckoned that the Pigeon traverses, in ten minutes, a distance of nine miles;<sup>61)</sup> and, on account of this extraordinary power of flight, the bird was employed already in ancient times as a messenger of good and evil tidings. Among the Romans, D. Brutus was the first who made use of this flying telegraph. He was beleaguered in Mutina by Antony, and, by means of a carrier Pigeon, gave the republicans intelligence of his distress. “*Quid vallum et vigil obsidio atque etiam retia amni prætenta profuere Antonio per cœlum eunte nuncio?*” exclaims Pliny in wonderment.\* And Ælian reports that Taurosthenes of Ægina,

\* See Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 53. The account given by Frontinus is somewhat different.

when he had won the garland in the Olympic Games, confided his glory to the wings of a Dove, which, on the same day even that he gained the victory, reached the shores of his native isle. The correspondence of lovers is most befitting such a messenger, for the male and female Pigeon are always in love. But in our age of railroads and machinery this romantic letter-post is passing away. Where it still exists, it is not Cupid that guides the airy pinions, but the Briareus of Industry that drives the carrier Pigeons along.\* Instead of the maiden who sends a greeting to her distant lover, and warms the faithful bird on her palpitating bosom, it is the *grand marchand de Paris*, who, with joyful, sparkling speculator's eyes, announces to a house in Antwerp that "la rente" has risen  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The purest poesy has become the most sordid prose.

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#### THE NEIGHBOURS.

On the boundary-line which separates the household fowl from the rest of the species, we perceive a group of birds which, without being in bond or vassalage to man, still seek his neighbourhood. They are, as it were, the yeomen or freeholders of his household, and form the transition to the other birds. Taken strictly, it is true, this can be said

\* Interesting particulars respecting the training, etc., of carrier pigeons, are given by Kohl in his 'Travels in the Netherlands;' also by Rennie, in his 'Instinct of Birds.'

only of the Stork and the Swallow ; while the Sparrow is rather a marauding intruder, suffered only as long as he does not too shamelessly abuse the proffered hospitality. But all three belong, in a more extended sense, to the followers of man, who seems to have imparted to them somewhat of his own nature, and from oldest time to have lived with them as merry comrade and neighbour. Sometimes, indeed, a certain religious feeling was mixed up with this connection. Man recognized, in the winged settlers beneath his roof, protecting and warning household spirits ; he felt excited to gratitude, and repaid them with fostering care and veneration. We give the first place to

### *The Stork.*

He is of nobler extraction than the swallow ; of high birth, as the nursery rhyme says, for his imposing nest is reared on roofs and gables. A pollard tree in the neighbourhood of a house or village serves him often for a domicile ; an ash, a maple, or an oak, for an elevated throne, is absolutely necessary for him, in order that he may have an extended view over his territory of meadows, fields, and morass.

When with the first warm March breeze the Stork returns to his village,<sup>63</sup>) there is a great rejoicing. He is greeted with song<sup>63</sup>) and exclamation, as one welcome back—as a faithful, long-missed friend. The old people in the village know him as the contemporary of their youth ;<sup>64</sup>) and to the children, whose friend he pre-eminently is, he brings the assurance and the pledge that Spring, for which







they have so impatiently longed, is come. He has, so to say, signed Spring's passport with his *visa*: there is no longer any doubt of his arrival. The nature and manners of this bird were looked upon, even by the ancients, as somewhat curious; the sixteenth century, which, it is true, has furnished a considerable number of such studies, has also its 'Encomium Ciconiæ;'<sup>\*</sup> and it is certain that the battles and migrations, the whimsicalities and rogueries, the affection and gratitude of the Stork, offer a rich store of pleasing poetical matter. Patriarch, general, physician, judge, prophet,—the Stork is all in one.

His very figure, even, how characteristic and significant! On a high wooden leg, which seems stuck into a red russia-leather boot, is balanced his stately body, over which he has thrown his white travelling paletot, turned up with black. His tail is short and obtuse; all the more slender and elongated is the neck, which carries the peculiarly expressive head with a tranquil dignity. The plumage lies close on the smooth forehead, like neatly combed back-hair; the brown eye twinkles with clear honest expression, in which however there is a touch of roguery, from out the black rings of the mask, not unlike spectacles. The visor terminates very comically in a long, grotesque, beak-nose, which, be it observed, is a weapon also to ensure respect. In gait, demeanour, manner, a pedantic pathos is expressed, reminding us of hoops and hair-powder, rapiers, high-heeled shoes,

<sup>\*</sup> One by Caspar Heldelin, another by Ulysses Aldrovandus. The Dutchman, Cornelius Musius (died 1572), has also sung the Stork in Latin verse. Unfortunately I have not been able to get sight of any of these.

and minuets. The Stork is an old-fashioned figure, and, as it would seem, came originally from Holland.\*

Wrapped in thoughtful silence, he stalks, like Mynheer, stiff and full of gravity, through his drains and meadows. At every step, he lifts, with measured cadence, the long, stocking-covered leg high in the air, as if to guard it from any unfitting appendages ; while head and neck, in a continual tick-tack, nod backwards and forwards in comical solemnity.† Thus, with ceremonious carriage, consort and spouse move along, like peripatetic philosophers, until one or other perceives the fat, sprawling croaker in the thick sedge, and suddenly darts forward the sharp bill, like a harpoon, to impale the unhappy wretch, and bury him in the depths of the gullet. The other Stork raises his head, and makes a bow with a flourish. It is an easy, noiseless, and yet assiduous chase : nothing interrupts them, unless it be that a curious observer comes too near them, or that something unusual happens. They then stand still ; one leg is drawn up close under the body, and lays hold of the other, thus to give greater firmness to the contemplative position ; the neck is stretched inquiringly

\* Nor is this merely metaphorical. In all the low lands, from the mouth of the Elbe to the Scheldt, the Stork is more at home than in any other tract of our globe, and in Holland is held more sacred than anywhere else. In the landscapes of certain Dutch painters he forms an almost typical accessory ; in every village, in most towns even, he is at home ; and in the Hague a house has been built on purpose for him, in the middle of the market-place. (Kohl : Travels.)

† The walk of a long-legged, stiff person is called, in the slang of German students, *storken* (to stork). [May there not be some connection between the deliberate walk of this bird and our "stalk"?—TRANSL.]



upwards, and the eye is fixed on the object of alarm. In this attitude, which, odd as it is, never sacrifices aught of its *grandezza*, they will remain for some minutes immovable, and with all the gravity of an automaton, until persuaded they may range further in safety, or that it would be wiser to take flight.

The large body rises with difficulty; and it is comic enough to see the worthy master of the ceremonies brought so completely out of his equilibrium. He makes a few awkward jumps, then follow some heavy flaps of the wings, and the feet are stretched out, like oars, behind; but yet the reeling mass rises scarcely above the ground. Suddenly, with a jerk, as though he had thrown away the tardy crutch, the phlegmatic walker on stilts mounts high in the ocean of air; and now, in grandest rounds and soarings, he displays to our astonished gaze the spectacle of his youthful flight. He will often float a long distance without a movement of the wings, as though supported by his own weight, gliding downward at last in spiral lines to the nest, where the hungry brood, in a clapping tongue,<sup>65</sup> give vent to their joy.

This introduces us into the household of the Stork, where we meet that patriarchal state of existence, and that human manner of life, which have made him at all times an object of wonderment. Above all, he is an attentive, faithful husband, though not without an admixture of paternal rigour, of even a passion to domineer.

As among the wandering shepherd tribes of the Steppes the chief precedes his family to look for new pastures, then

returns to lead them thither, so does the male Stork appear in Germany one or two weeks before the female, in order to reconnoitre. And when he has again found the old moss-covered house-ridge with the empty nest,—when he sees the fountain in the courtyard, with the wide-spreading trees beside it, and has cast a look over the country, he suddenly disappears, to return soon after with his spouse; and then, with strange obeisances and merry clapping, introducing her as mistress, sets about repairing the old nest or constructing a new one.<sup>66</sup>) Possession is thus taken; the Stork arranges his household, and parental cares now assert their rights. But the matrimonial tranquillity, as the busy occupations of love gradually cease, does not always remain undisturbed. Envy, jealousy, violence, treachery, invade also married Stork life. Often on the frontier of the hereditary realm appears a black-and-white usurper:<sup>67</sup>) often too another wooer for her favours will approach the couch of the brooding female bird. Then arise bloody feuds. The Stork husband has descried the rival from afar, and in rushing, rustling flight, darts downward to his nest, to protect his wife and dwelling. His home is gained, but close upon him follows the daring wooer. The Stork bows his head, and raises with a hiss the spear-like beak to receive his foe; striking his wings at the same time, to inflict a crushing blow. But the attack is as determined as the defence. Both combatants thrust their bills through each other's neck and breast: maddened with fury, they rise again, their wings beat with loud concussion against each other; a wild clatter fills the air; one

is wounded by a deep thrust: he flies; the other follows breathing vengeance, and both disappear in the distance. But the combat is not at an end: in a few moments both parties come to a stand, and the struggle begins with renewed vigour. Each of the combatants strives to get in advance of the other; they approach the nest by degrees, now pressing forward, now driving back the assailant. Then the lonely spouse, who has been quiet in the asylum of her dwelling, begins to clapper, inciting her consort to persevere. He hears the call. A few more potent blows rustle through the air; again the sharp beaks come in contact, and the adversary falls vanquished to the ground.\* The contest is gloriously won; house and home are safe henceforth, while the victorious Stork receives the homage of all the members of his acquaintance.

Should occasionally the Stork husband have real cause of jealousy, or only an imaginary one,—as when, for example, hens' eggs are surreptitiously placed in the mamma Stork's nest,†—the female generally falls a victim. At sound of the horrified scream of the betrayed husband, a whole tribe of long-legs collects together, to behold and judge of the transgression. It is, to a certain degree, a law of vengeance which is here carried out, for every member of the disgraced tribe thrusts his weapon into the

\* One of my friends, in 1849, witnessed such a battle of storks in his farm-yard, which lasted an hour and a half, and ended with both animals pulling each other, in their fury, down into the well. The bath sobered them; and they allowed themselves to be pulled out again patiently and in peace.

† This is related in the 'Mercure de France,' 1777, in a letter from Smyrna.

bosom of the guilty one. The husband alone,—and it is a remarkable feature in this strange bird-nature,—the husband alone takes no share in the bloody expiation. He wails unceasingly, as though his heart were suffering for the disgrace which has befallen him, and bemoaning the tragic destiny which has fallen on his house; and forthwith leaves the village and the country.

At other times the Stork is a most tolerant character; and, just as around the baronial castle swarms of poor retainers settle and seek protection, so does he allow the sparrow and the swallow to take up their abode beneath the protecting, spray-built cupola of his house. He however stands, like an Emir, in grave composure above the noisy rabble, without allowing their boldest tricks to mislead or anger him. Indeed the Stork, above all other birds, has a feeling for home, and love for domestic life. He is, as we have already said, a watchful household chief, and kindly moreover, notwithstanding his rigour; showing as much tenderness to his progeny, as filial gratitude to parents and benefactors. On this account, the Stork has at all times been regarded as “a bird of piety;”<sup>\*</sup> for this reason, too, do the old fabulists set him up as a pattern of domestic virtue;<sup>68)</sup> and even Aristophanes has not disdained to erect a monument to his affectionate gratitude.<sup>69)</sup> Thus, it is said, he will carry his young upon his back when teaching them to fly, or to save them when the nest is threatened by fire; whence, as some suppose, he ac-

<sup>\*</sup> Called by the Hebrews, “the pious bird.” (Job xxxix. 13, Jeremiah viii. 7, Zechariah v. 9.)



quired the old German name of Adeboar.\*<sup>70)</sup> It is said also that in time of famine he will ruminate, and feed his young with the cud; that he will tend his little ones or parent birds with self-sacrificing care;<sup>71)</sup> and a more generally spread belief, one too that may be easily explained, is that he annually brings a gift, as a sort of rent, to the peasant in whose tenement he dwells,—first a feather, then an egg, and lastly a nestling.† I will cite no further instances: as a poetical observation of Nature, which views chance circumstances as intention, and natural occurrences as wonders, has here also interwoven many a pleasing, fanciful characteristic with the portraiture of this favourite bird. One thing however must not be forgotten,—that the Stork extends his love of children to human little ones; and that these again, owing to a pretty misunderstanding of his old German appellation, represent him as the sage to whom the mystery of the generation of man is not unknown. Children hail and greet him as the kind messenger who brings them their new-born little brothers and sisters, and lays them in the cradle.<sup>72)</sup>

Cleanliness too is the fundamental law of his household

\* It is a popular belief, that fire and lightning will not approach the house on which the stork has taken up his abode. If a destructive conflagration be at hand, the stork carries away both eggs and young ones some days beforehand: this belief dates from remotest time. Even Attila concluded that Aquileia would fall, when the storks quitted the beleaguered town. Procop. Bell. Vand. i. 4.

† Sittewald quotes the following:—"We go no more to England, because they took away all our children, sold them as serfs, and practised usury with them."

economy; it is a part, so to speak, of the national character of the Stork, and is indeed the more necessary, as on his white dress every impurity would show itself more displeasingly. The bill supplies the place of brush and comb; and on the coat, the breast-facings, and stockings there is always a something to smooth down and order. Nor is all this a mere show of cleanliness: he would not be satisfied with having a clean shirt-front on an unwashed person; and he bathes frequently.

The Stork, it is clear, reveals a relationship between his mode of being and action, and that of men;\* and hence he attaches himself to man, and man to him. Careless and confidingly he walks about the court and garden of the farmer; in seaport towns, he even stalks on amidst all the bustle of the streets,† and expects every one whom he meets to make room for him; he wanders from market to market, from fountain to fountain, examines boldly here a basket, and there a dish; in short, he feels himself at home. Despite all familiarity, he knows how to make himself respected; and he maintains not only his perfect freedom, but even a sort of superiority. It is easy to tame him, yet the hate with which the free Stork pursues the domesticated one is inveterate; and it is undeniable

\* The stork dreams,—which, to my knowledge, has been observed only in those intelligent birds the canaries, and, as some assert, in sparrows also.

† Thus we learn from Juvenal, Sat. i. 116, that a stork had her nest on the Temple of Concord, amidst the noise and bustle of the City of the Seven Hills; an occurrence which Hadrian deemed of sufficient importance to be commemorated by a medal.

that occasionally whole flocks of Storks have attacked the degenerate slave and massacred him.

This leads us, finally, to the great political events—the wars and tribunals of the Storks. Both are strange occurrences, for the Stork is naturally a lover of peace; and his municipal arrangements are founded on the laws of a free, well-ordered association. The warlike ambition of dynasties is unknown in the history of the Storks: their battles are combats for self-preservation. If, for instance, in a Stork territory, either from immigration or other cause, over-population should threaten pauperism, then the allied tribes all assemble in the Areopagus. A council of war is held, the elders discourse, and, after long deliberation, and amid loud acclamation, it is decided to declare war against the Polyphagi of the hostile camp. The valiant combatants advance in serried ranks against each other; now victory inclines to one side and now defeat, till at last one band succeeds in overthrowing the other. Brave champions prefer an honourable death to disgraceful flight; the others flee, abandon their nests (which are then razed), and emigrate. Later however, necessity and a thirst for revenge impel them to return, and renew the strife.

When in the height of Summer the meadows are parched, and ponds and morasses are dried up, the Stork resorts to the interior of the woods, with their glades, brooks, and marshes; and when also here, in the beginning of Autumn, the inferior animals retire into their holes and winter abodes, he prepares for his migration to the South; and

vast numbers, all travel-equipped, collect together and cruise about in the air. At such times it happens that the Storks hold a tribunal. It is a "right with might," like old military German custom, if not even according to the Lycurgus code. On a retired mead the long-shanked personages come together from all quarters; they fly round and round in large circles, making a loud clapping, for the matter in hand is a grave one. There are fifty or a hundred. At first they move hither and thither, groups are formed, much passionate clapping is going on, and all betokens the approach of a stormy debate. At length the parties close up and form a large imposing ring, in the centre of which, resigned to his fate, stands the victim. Single voices, shrill and loud, make themselves heard; it is the advocate for the prosecution, who brings forward the impeachment, and those charged with the defence, who fight the battle of the accused; whose sole crime consists in his weakness, and who, unable to bear the fatigues of the journey, it is now proposed to kill, for his own and the people's good. The assembly frequently interrupts, by its impetuosity, the pathos of the speakers. At this moment another rises: it is the Provost. In the name of the elders he calls upon the community, regardless of friendship, connection, or favour, without envy and without hate, to pronounce their decision; and, after a solemn pause, the assembled multitude replies, with uplifted wing, "He is guilty!" Then, amid deafening clamour, the sentence is executed; and the unfortunate wretch, pierced by the weapons of the assembly, succumbs to an early death.<sup>73</sup>)



The rights of supremacy have been maintained, the multitude disperses, and there is now nothing more to prevent the departure of the wandering caravan.<sup>74)</sup>

This generally takes place suddenly, and in ordered ranks;\* but as these quickly rise to the highest regions of the air, they are soon lost to the sight. In uninterrupted flight, and sometimes in flocks of two and three thousand, these Europe-sick birds direct their course to the Egyptian coast.<sup>75)</sup> Here is the Stork's second home. Here, in the lowlands of the Delta, abounding in frogs and snakes, he rules as a sort of Pasha, as familiar and sacred an object to the brown child of the Fellah, as to the fair-haired boy of the dweller in Masuah. And verily the strange bird, with his gravity and seriousness, accords well with that land of singularity and gloom. Yet even beneath the palms and pyramids he does not forget the German village and its lime-trees; and when the glowing heat of advancing summer shines down from the brazen sky of Egypt, he returns again to his home, amid the reviving verdure of our northern climate.

One who is as enthusiastic an admirer as an attentive observer of the Stork has said of him, most truly, that "he is a *human* animal;"† and no one can be surprised that in fairy lore this animal should be chosen for enchanted transformations, and that popular faith has sanctified and exalted him to a prophet. He is, above all

\* Ambrose also: "Quasi tessera militari pariter omnes moventur."

† "Ein Menschenthier;" meaning, that he had somewhat of humanity in his nature.—TRANSL.

other birds, the neighbour and counterpart of man : none ranks higher than he.\*

### *The Swallow.*

The Swallow shares with the Stork the favour and the dwelling of man. It is a bird of passage, spread over the entire Old World, and on this account is more generally regarded as the harbinger of Spring. She finds her way back to her old nest across deserts, seas, and glaciers, and arrives before many of her winged companions, although she has travelled further away than they all; for she steers her course to the very shores of Senegal. But it is for this reason that her arrival causes such rejoicing. The Greek and Roman poets sang<sup>76)</sup> of her as "Spring's messenger;" even now her coming is greeted with the same songs<sup>77)</sup> in which the Thracian<sup>78)</sup> boy once announced her arrival; and the Swedish peasant, for many hundred years, has hailed the returning friend with joyful welcomings. Her tidings, it is true, are not always infallible. Single skirmishers will often precede the main host, and get nipped by the last frosts of Winter; on which account, side by side with their authentic prediction of approaching Spring, that proverb<sup>79)</sup> of doubt appears, which, from

\* And yet our forefathers, while still heathens, must have eaten the stork; for St. Boniface forbids expressly the enjoyment of this food. Even now, it would seem that certain Slavonic tribes, despite their Christianity, find the flesh of the stork very savoury. The ancient Romans, according to Horace, accounted it among the most prized dishes, although, in the poet's time, it was no longer in vogue.

the time of Aristotle, is to be found in the mouth of every people.

What pleases most in the Swallow, and that also in which the bird's whole being is concentrated, is its flight.<sup>80)</sup> It chases its prey while flying; while flying it bathes and drinks; sometimes she will feed her young in flying past, and the German name of the bird seems to point to this peculiarity.<sup>81)</sup>

The Swallow is indeed a swimmer through the air without a rival,\* although the power of endurance of the pigeon is certainly greater. Who has not gazed in admiration at the rapidity<sup>82)</sup> and impetuosity of those rushing pinions!—now dashing down in exulting zigzag through the clouds, now shooting straight across the lake,—chasing each other like boys in confused entanglement; then dropping down like lightning; now darting upwards, or, at the approach of a storm, skimming silently over the ground in long quick lines, catching the flies in passing, or the water-insects as they dance on the surface of the pond. It is an unceasing picture of new and changing attraction; a merry labyrinth, whose mazes intertwine in a thousand directions, and which the quickest eye is unable to follow.

No sooner are the young ones fledged, than they are instructed in these arts by their parents. In a street, between two walls, or wherever a narrow and protected passage presents itself, the exercises begin. At first the

\* According to some accounts, the swallow can perform a distance of fifty miles in an hour; in a day, therefore, six hundred.

mother shoots forward in a straight line; the little ones follow somewhat unsteadily, but soon more and more quickly, till the teacher abruptly stops, and cruises through the air in bends, circles, and sudden turns. The young troop has gained confidence; and even though some of them may grow tired and get confused, in three evenings the task is accomplished. These bold travellers through the air know nothing of rest:\* they are a personification of the *perpetuum mobile*, the free-corps band, the Bedouins of the bird army.

But how beautifully, and with what wisdom, has the hand of Nature formed the Swallow! The delicate, slender body, with the close-lying plumage; the long, pointed wings, which lie upon and almost cross each other; the elongated, widely forked tail;—all is elasticity, all is formed for motion. The feet alone form a contrast, on account of their awkward shortness: they are scarcely able to support the body, showing that the path of the Swallow is not on the ground, but on high among the clouds.

Yet it is not the flight alone which makes the Swallow so interesting a bird. The quick and sprightly eye, the ever-twittering voice,<sup>83)</sup>—now a low plaintive cry, and now a gay shrill scream,—all denote a being of marked character. And this character is strange enough: it might be termed a psychological riddle. For while the Swallow builds her nest confidingly and with domestic quiet beneath man's roof,<sup>84)</sup> beside his hearth even, she

\* "*Hirundo vaga*," as the bird is termed by Auct. Philom.



at the same time pursues her noisy journeys, and gives way to her love of unrestrained and aimless wandering. While she, on the one hand, carries her vaunted cleanliness to wearisome punctuality,<sup>85)</sup> she, on the other, builds up the walls of her dwelling with dirt and mud.\* Swallows unite with those of the same tribe in social colonies, willingly rendering each other assistance.<sup>86)</sup> They cherish their young with tender love, guarding their nest the whole night long with merry prattle; and yet, not rarely, quarrelsome screams are heard.† The passion for the chase too is so deeply rooted in “the pious bird’s” nature, that sometimes even a comrade is made the object of plunder.‡ Oken remarks very justly, that “if birds of prey are anywhere to be found, they are the Swallows.” With daring courage they will attack crows and other robbers, but they drop down stupefied with fear when they perceive the hawk in their neighbourhood. Some hasten

\* Πηλοδομεῖ θάλαμον, according to the old epigram. For the rest however, the method of building is skilful enough. With their bills they form the mud or wetted clay into morsels, give them a half-round form, and then stick them on and press them firmly with their breast; they then seat themselves inside, turn round and round, smoothing the inner side, and giving the nest depth and roundness. This ingenious architecture reminds one of the proceedings of certain mason-bees.

† This, it is true, is principally the case with the sea-swallow.

‡ In the first part of ‘Thierseelenkunde,’ quoted above, the following roguish trick is related:—Under the portico of the Collège des Quatre Nations, two pair of swallows were building their nests at the same time. On one of the swallows observing that the architects of the other nest were absent, he hastened thither, stole some of the freshly prepared mortar, which had been just brought, used it for his own nest, and thus continued the theft for a full hour.

too much in advance of the caravan of new-comers; others again, with equal danger, linger behind after the travellers have departed. Thus, in the various contrarities of his nature, the Swallow presents a quality of character, which corresponds perhaps with his position between singing-birds and birds of prey.

We however know the Swallow only as the kindly blessing-laden bird.<sup>87</sup>) The touching love for her young, her confiding nestling against houses, her roving games in the air, her coming and going with the coming and departing joys of Summer,—all this has awakened tender feelings towards her, has made her sacred. It is to this the sensitive Sir Humphry Davy refers, when justly calling the Swallow the “rival of the nightingale;” and Shakspeare has created a most stirring scene, when, in the first act of *Macbeth*, after a fearful explosion of Megærean passion, the regard is suddenly drawn towards the peaceful Swallow’s nest. Lady Macbeth, in hellish madness, arms herself for the murder. “Come thick night,” she exclaims,

“And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;  
Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry, ‘Hold! hold!’”

When suspecting nothing, Duncan and Banquo suddenly appear; and then begins that short dialogue, in which at once eternally pure Nature is presented to the shaken mind in all her loveliness:—

“This guest of summer,  
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,

By his loved masonry, that the heaven's breath  
 Smells wooingly here : no jutty, frieze, buttress,  
 Nor coin of vantage, but this bird hath made  
 His pendent bed and procreant cradle : where they  
 Most breed and haunt, I have observed, the air  
 Is delicate."

It is on account of these very qualities, that so many a fond belief is connected with this bird. Where the Swallow nestles, no lightning will fall ; the place she deserts, is taken possession of by death ; and whoever destroys her nest, destroys in doing so his own fortune,\* while blessing attends the hospitable protector. Her voice, which to the Romans and Hebrews sounded so peculiar that they gave her a name accordingly,† may, to coarser ears, seem a mere confused chirping ; to the more profoundly acute ear of the poet and of the people however, the song of innocent joy is therein audible,—the sweet cuphony of content ; yet oftener still, a lament for the instability of earthly happiness. Antiquity too speaks with one accord of the sighing, the *fleBILE murmur*<sup>88</sup>) of the Swallow ; and the Greek myth changed Progne, who unknowingly killed her own son, into the restless bird, that, with blood-spot on its breast, flutters lamenting around the dwellings of men.‡ Thus, in truth and in fiction, do the nations of the present and past offer believingly a hand to each other.

\* See Grimm, Mythol. In Spain and Italy the swallows are fed by thousands.

† The Hebrew *sís* is plainly imitative ; Varro also asserts this of the Latin word *hirundo*.

‡ See Virgil, Ecl. vi. 78. The bloody mark however distinguishes the house-swallow alone (*Hirundo rustica*).

In Autumn, the Swallows assemble on roofs and near lakes, to disappear shortly in larger flocks. They vanish, then return again, as if the parting were too painful, and finally they suddenly set off.

### *The Sparrow.*

Wherever a mere hut is found, and a corn-field beside it, there the Sparrow is sure to have taken up his quarters. He very often dwells with the Swallow beneath the same roof, yet it would hardly be possible to find two neighbours who are more unlike. You need but look at the Sparrow, to see the difference. In him is to be found none of the cleanliness and neatness, none of the volubility and pleasing nature, which make the swallow so welcome a guest. The Sparrow is a vulgar bird;—a proletarian, with all the cunning and all the vices of his class. Slight and persecution are his inheritance. Even in the Bible it is said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?” and in Aristophanes, even seven are offered for an obole. His dirty colour, his brown jacket, his reddish-brown head and sooty cheeks, his dumpy figure, his bustling flight,—gait, voice, demeanour,—in short, all betrays his low birth and vulgar mind. But the Pariah avenges himself on the society which has expelled him, by his truly cynical shamelessness. With him nothing is sacred: property, talents, custom, authority—he sets them all at defiance; even the ties of blood and relationship are unable to bind him. The Sparrow is an Atheos: a wild



Communist, but shrewd, active, and untiring. There is somewhat of Master Reynard's nature in him, only the engaging dash and off-hand boldness are entirely wanting; that genteel, hare-brained humour which always invests the red-whiskered skulker with a certain amiability.

The building the nest, which with most birds is a work of persevering affection and art, causes this libertine not a single care. Just as the fox, with deep cunning, drives the badger from his burrow, so does the Sparrow to the swallow,\* but with brute force. The comfortable, solid, bow-windowed chamber pleases him. In an unguarded moment he breaks in; the surprised birds generally give way without resistance; and should they even attempt to regain possession of their property, the robber repels every attack with impetuosity. This is the law of the strongest, for the unconscionable Sparrow knows no other. Sometimes the intrusive parasite gets a place in the stork's or crow's nest, as a sort of doorkeeper or tower-warder; but in such great persons' houses he is not always quite safe. If, at last, he is obliged to submit to some sort of work, he takes it easily, and leaves it for the most part to the weaker sex, who here is not yet emancipated, but plays rather the part of slave than housewife. For the Sparrow is a Communist even in marriage, and lives in polygamy.

Despite his gluttony,† he knows none of the cares of sustenance. Too indolent to earn a livelihood, he reaps

\* Even the pigeon also.

† His name points to this. The Sparrow (*Sperling*; Old High German, *Sperch*, *Sperk*;) is the Sparer; that is to say, the Seeker, Collector.

everywhere where he has not sown. His meal is prepared for him alike in the fresh-upshooting field, and among the stubble. He plucks the first cherry from the tree, nor does the last remaining one escape his glance. Yet withal he has a dainty palate: he never eats a whole grape, but flutters from one to the other, pecking always only the ripest berries. The tender young green-pea is what he likes best, just when it begins to swell in the pod; corn, when the grains are yet full of milky juice. But the epicure knows also how to accommodate himself to scanty seasons, and to put up with what he can get. Vegetables, grubs, caterpillars, spiders,—he devours every sort of vermin; but corn is still the provender most in request. He follows the sower in the field, the thresher in the barn, the farm-servant to the granary, the poultry to the entrance of the houses, the horse to the manger, the pigeon to the dovecot; he will open the craw of the young pigeons, to get at the grains of corn within. Thus the gormandizer grows to be a thief, a freebooter, a murderer: one sin begets another: such is the Sparrow's career.

When the bold vagabond has once fixed himself somewhere, neither force nor cunning is able to turn him out. Not in vain has he associated with men, and learnt from them craft and wickedness; for also among birds bad example finds readier imitation than a good one. "He who will catch a sparrow must get up betimes," says the proverb; and with how much truth! He flies away from boys as soon as he catches sight of them; and if you stoop to pick up a stone to fling at him, he is off in a moment.

Besides, it is not easy to scare this paragon of audacity, or to inspire him with respect. He is more than a sceptic; he is a decided freethinker. In presumptuous security, he seats himself on the nose or arm of the fluttering, clapping ghost, to whom the charge of the garden is committed. In its very shadow he bids it defiance, and thus, it may be said, enjoys the fruit of his wickedness with heightened consciousness of his transgression. If he has happily escaped from a net or a pea-shooter, he makes a tremendous outcry; jeers at and abuses the awkward fowler from his hiding-place, and anon the whole scoundrelly fraternity chime in with all the power of their lungs.

And what a dissonance is this Sparrows' tone! Of all the Babel confusion of bird-tongues, there are few more displeasing than this.<sup>69)</sup> All the boorish vulgarity of his nature is expressed in that tone. It is true, to the Sparrow himself it sounds like music. He never tires, the rogue, of repeating again and again his shrill chirrup, although no one cries, *Da capo*; and, to the despair of all lovers of harmony, makes himself heard loudest, just when one of his race, endued with the gift of song, is about to rejoice the listener. But so it is: the only true nobility, that of genius, is what the plebeian always hates most. Sparrow, and nothing but Sparrow: such is the levelling system of these *sans-culottes*.

Who can wonder if peace dwelleth not among them? In their household—as if indeed it could be otherwise with the fickle and the wanton—reign jealousy, envy, malice,

falsehood, and deceit. But seldom is found one more piously inclined ; one perhaps that settles near the cell of the prison, and with his rough voice sings to the prisoner, telling him still to hope ; or another, maybe, that leads a meditative life as recluse beside a chapel, consoling himself with the thought that not a Sparrow falls to the ground unknown to the Creator.

During three parts of the year, the Sparrow lives in plenty. In garden, field, and meadow he undertakes his razzias ; and in Autumn he spends whole days in the corn-fields, where he rushes and bustles about in flocks from one sheaf to the other.

But when all is cleared away, and he is left behind with crows, rooks, and tomtits, he retires to his winter-quarters in the streets of the town, to stables and courtyards. Then comes Lent. The uproarious boaster grows still : cold and hunger press upon him. There he sits, doubled together in the circle of his family, his feathers blown up round him, his head between his shoulders, so that only a beak and pair of eyes look out from the surrounding fur ; or he ensconces himself all alone in a sheltered corner, looking out for a window-ledge or a chimney-stack, where he may catch a ray of winter sun or warm blast from the hearth ; or perhaps he taps at the window-casement, and with pitiful mien begs for alms. Yet when a single sun-beam only pierces the grey clouds and thaws the snow upon the roofs, in an instant his vagabond Dick-Turpin nature is awakened, and the pert chirrup and hopping about begin anew. He well knows that the days of



penance are soon to end, and that Spring will not forget to spread his table also.

“ They have no team and have no plough,  
They neither reap, nor sow, nor till,  
Yet God in heaven feeds them still.”—*Hebel*.

And with such feelings we may even listen to a Sparrow overture. It is, after all, a voice of Spring. But to kiss and fondle him in one's bosom, like the maiden in Catullus,—this a tender, enamoured female heart alone can do.

The Redtail,\* Robin Redbreast, Water Wagtail,  
and Starling.

A SUMMER MORNING AT MY WINDOW.

There are some near neighbours still left,—dear, familiar friends, who must be mentioned, if only in a few words. I hear and see them every morning from my watch-tower, when the first gleams of dawn shine through the curtain which the broad-leaved walnut hangs around my window. The pond is lying half-concealed in haze, the neighbouring mills still keep holiday, a stirring wind rustles through the bed of reeds, when first of all the Redtail lifts his timid voice. Has the sleepless cuckoo, or the flute of the yellow thrush, awakened him? or was it parental cares which chased sleep from his eyelids? He runs along the ridge of the city-wall, and seems to be seeking prey for his young, who have their nest in yonder chink; and louder and still more frequent resounds his melancholy

\* *Sylvia fytis*.

strophe. The little animal forces it out with difficulty ; it is as if he were bethinking himself of a forgotten word, and still the hoarse voice makes the attempt anew. But in vain : in that one poor, single, melancholy sound must he compress all the world of joy and sorrow of his birdish heart ; and in this one tone he sings on uninterruptedly from Spring till late in Autumn, a rival of the Redbreast, piping on when other songsters are all silent ; and this very circumstance it is which makes his song so touching. He is the widow's mite. The bird besides is unassuming, and almost shy, as though he were not aware how beautiful are the grey tints on his wings and back, and how becoming is the rusty red on the lower part of his costume. There is much dexterity in his flight ; his tail is ever in motion, his eyes are bright, and from the very house-top even are able to perceive the smallest beetle in the sand below ; and, quick !—he has caught him already. There is besides little to tell of the good-natured bird ; and this may be taken for praise, just as much so, as when said of the housewife, who is thought to be all the better, the less cause she gives for discourse. His warm nest, made of stubble, is pretty to look at, with its little bluish-green eggs ; but the schoolboy leaves it untouched, for he knows that the lightning would wither his predatory hand. It sounds even yet like an echo of the olden German faith, which held the Redtail sacred because of his red plumage, calling him Thor's bird,—him with the flaming beard, the Thunderer.

And such is really the name of his next relation and

neighbour, the Redbreast (*Sylvia rubecula*); though, it is true, the legend relates that the bird's breast has remained red since that day when, on Golgotha, he fluttered lamentingly round the cross of Christ, and endeavoured in vain to staunch the innocently flowing blood.\*

This lively flitter through the bushes, too, visits my haunts occasionally. Opposite, in the alder-bushes of the mill, is his nest; it lies almost on the ground, and is built of a few feathers and bits of stubble loosely thrown together, but securely arched over with leaves and brambles.

But though he only comes from time to time on a visit, he still belongs to the aerial accessories of my idyl; and I should be sorry to lose his song in the chorus whose improvised airs gladden me at morning and evening. It is a pleasant, delicate voice, spinning itself like a golden thread from bush to bush; but when the bird has a nest of young ones to guard, it swells loudly and is full of feeling. And how active he is, how brisk and lively! He hops through the hedge, upon the tree, then down on the ground, near the water, in the sedge: never stopping, never resting, always twittering, and in an instant snapping up the moth beneath the leaf, or the fly upon the

\* The important part which the Robin plays in English songs and traditions has already been shown. According to German popular belief, a Robin's nest may not be taken, for then the cow would give red milk, or the house be struck by lightning. In France, the Robin is used as an amulet, and still more frequently the wren. It is a favourite custom to wear the feathers of these birds, especially at fairs, being persuaded that then one is sure to make good bargains.

jutting rafter ; a dear, bright, gladsome little soul. And he looks about the while with his twinkling coal-black eyes so honestly, and follows me, when I go down, so boldly step by step, that it is impossible to help loving the animal, and feeling kindly towards him, for his very trust and inoffensiveness.

But yonder comes the Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), the pert young damsel ! and displays at once all her wanton arts, as if to punish me for having forgotten her. What a light, charming creature it is ! How plain, and yet how clean and befitting, is her dress ! The kirtle bluish-grey, the stomacher white ; black the cap-tie, which descends over the neck ; black too the slippers ; and black, with a white border, the long train behind. Then, too, the vizor before the eyes,—much in the manner of the Turkish beauties, who dye their brows and eyelashes black, to make the white of the eyes and forehead look still fairer. The choice simplicity of this toilet is obvious : it is just fitting for a Quakeress. For the rest however, the Wagtail is a friendly, sociable bird, and loves mankind and animals. Up yonder on the gable is built her nest,—simple but clean, so that even a strip of paper or a straw gives her offence ; and thence the changeful stanzas of her song are heard, like a counter-tenor among the thinner voices of the hedge-sparrow and linnet. She suddenly darts downwards : now in the middle of the court she runs before my feet, hunts after the flies with the prettiest tripping step imaginable ; her little head always nodding, and her restless tail bobbing up and down. Hence the name *Motacilla*, *i. e.* Wagtail :



in Low German, *Wipstert*.\* But soon she darts through the air in short sudden turns, as if flung up and down by the elastic pressure of the atmosphere; then across the pond, and away to the open fields; there busily, and never satiated, to follow the plough, which turns up worms and grubs in plenty.† Or she alights on the meadows bordering the stream, where peaceful cattle are grazing, from whose backs she boldly picks the insects. Wherever she comes, she is well received; and, although in some places the clean bird has been given the ungentle title of Cow or Swine Bird,‡ if somewhat uncouth, it is kindly meant, and not incorrect.

But, most of all, I like to see the Wagtail beside the water. She runs along the shore so quickly that the eye is hardly able to follow her steps, and yet with a flying glance she examines every crevice, every stalk, that conceals her reposing or creeping prey. Now she steps upon a smoothly washed stone; she bathes and drinks;—and how becomingly, and with what an air! The very nicest *soubrette* could not raise her dress more coquettishly, the best taught dancer not move with more graceful *pas*, than the pretty bather § as she lifts her train and dainty little feet. Suddenly she throws herself, with a jump and a bound, into the air, to catch the circling gnat; and now should be seen

\* French, *hochequeue*. In the Altmark the name of this bird (*Wipstert*!) is used proverbially, to designate a restless, changeable person.

† Hence the name “Ackermännchen” (little ploughman).

‡ In certain districts of France the White Wagtail is similarly called *vachette*, while the yellow one is named *bergeronnette*.

§ In Poitou, I believe, it is really called *lavandière*.

the beating of wings, the darting hither and thither, the balancing and the shakes, and the *allegretto* that her tail keeps time to. Nothing can surpass it in lightness. In fine, of all the little feathered people, none, except the swallow, is more graceful, fuller of movement, more adroit or insinuating, than the Wagtail.

And shall I not notice thee, my little Reed Sparrow, with thy untiring throat? Though always somewhat harsh, I like even to hear its chiding when forbidding my approach to the cradle, built so skilfully on the breezy columns of sedge. Or thee, calm, contented Hedge Sparrow, with thy sentimental ditty? Or the Finch, that wandering truant, who merrily interrupts your dialogue with his fresh warbling? I would fain draw a picture of ye all; but ye are such little people! and close to my ear a certain notability is hemming and calling my attention, not very pleased at my neglect, and him I can no longer put off. His black garment and official air at once betray that he is the *cantor loci*. He needs no introduction; for who does not know the Starling? Yonder in the apple-tree I have built him a house, and for the last three years he has made it his summer seat; he is therefore one of the family. A merry, delightful rogue! His home is in Iceland, on the Himalayas, among the be-tailed Chinese and the goggle-eyed Caffres. North or south, it is all the same to him; he is the courier and forerunner of Spring in spite of all the others. Often, in February and March, while I am still lying on my bed half sunk in sleep, and, in fancy dreading the rain, snow,

or storm of the morrow, bury myself all the deeper in the pillow,—hark!—all at once a clear and golden sound reaches my ear: there comes from the branches a cheery call to awake; and astonished and joyful, up I spring, and behold! there they are, the dear, agreeable birds! The Starlings are come! They came with the first sunbeam, and Winter now is dropping from every roof, and the heart draws a fresh deep inspiration. But they are rocking themselves in the wind, high up on the tops of the poplars, round which the first leaf-buds have woven a shade of brown, and are sending forth their melodious “Ho—iho!” With like effect may the horn of the cowherd be heard sounding down into the valley from the fresh green mountains; so too, after a long voyage, the rejoicing cry of “Land!” from the sailor in the top. From the inmost recesses of the bosom, the exulting whistle mounts upward to the highest octave. And then, too, they sing so pleasingly and tenderly, like love-longing maidens; and they lift their wings, beat time with the tail, nod their head and turn their eyes,—all exactly like real virtuosos. Everything about them is full of life, and joyousness, and music, till they suddenly fall into their humming and grating sounds, as though a string had snapped. But this just serves as a *charivari* for the fugitive Winter, who now and then however grumblingly turns round, and throws a handful of snow at the bills of the saucy singers. After all, this circumstance of falling out of a falsetto is the peculiar nature of these wits. Their mother tongue is harsh, and they particularly accent their *r*’s, as Scaliger has already re-

marked. It is for this reason that they are called *Staar*\* (Starling).

As to his nest, he cares but little about it : a hole, and a mattress of feathers, hair, and stubble, are sufficient for him and his. But he thinks all the more of eating, and of eating much. Even the Bohemian Chatterer, which is decried as the most ravenous of birds, hardly surpasses him in voracity. This is the reason why he is always hunting or on his travels, and even leaves his young family, at least during the night. He frequents meadows and pasturages, in company with crows and wagtails ; for he is a good-natured and honest fellow, who grudges neither himself nor others the best of everything. But what he likes most is to encamp in the cherry orchard and vineyard, which does his taste great credit, but which puts him, the cherished and beloved one, in constant danger of his life. At such times it is interesting to watch the flight of these birds, and see how they come in whole flocks,—hundreds together in a single cloud, fluttering, rustling, twirling, as if driven along by a tempest. All crowd towards the centre, each one circles round the other, and thus on they waltz, helter-skelter, with noise and clattering. In vain does the kite bend his talons as he sees the wheeling mass roll by : it would hurry him on along with it. There is tactic in this boisterousness ; a bending and descending, so that now, in advancing, they deploy, spread themselves out like a living net, and now, rising high up one over the other, vanish from the sight, all except a fine black streak ; when sud-

\* Hence, too, it is clear, the Greek ψάπ.



denly, in full sweep, down they all come, rushing on their pasture. The scene is always pleasant to look at, as much so now as three thousand years ago, when it afforded Homer one of his finest comparisons, in speaking of the swarms of fleeing Greeks.

“ Wedged in one body, like a flight of cranes,  
That shriek incessant while the falcon, hung  
High on poised pinions, threatens their callow young :  
So from the Trojan chiefs the Grecians fly,  
Such the wild terror and the mingled cry.”\*

If however the indefatigable birds are at last tired of sweeping through the air, they will come wheeling down to a pond, and dash laughing into the rushes. There they hop about, bow and bend to each other, sigh, whistle, sing, and chatter. It makes a pattering as when rain is dropping merrily down upon the leaves ; and thus till late in the night they keep up their noisy riot.

It is a droll, strange bird, this Starling,—a thorough buffoon in his way, as skilful and cunning as a dog. With ludicrous seriousness he stalks and swaggers up and down the room, and, stupid as he appears, he has however an eye for everything. He knows exactly the voice and look of his master ; and, when scolded, he slinks away ashamed into a corner. He is bold however : he perches on the goodwife’s spindle, on the painter’s palette, or sits on the inkstand of the clerk ; and when dinner is ready, he is always the first at table. He has also a spice of the magpie’s thievery. Whatever shines and sparkles he is fond of. A thimble,

\* Pope’s Homer. .

pins, metal buttons, a bead or ring, Urim and Thummim—everything he can lay hold of he collects together and carries away, and, if the first hiding-place be not safe, he looks out for another. He is moreover very cleanly, and never leaves the nest without sweeping it out. But what is most prized of all is his docility, especially his power of speech. He studies of his own accord, and mews like a cat, cackles like a hen, and whistles like a blackbird. He learns languages also—French, German, Latin—a thorough bird-professor; and this produces a medley smattering and small talk, just as people who have travelled much are accustomed to mix up scraps of foreign tongues in their conversation. Songs of considerable length he learns easily. One sings, “To God your grateful voices raise;” another, “See the conquering hero comes;” and a third can repeat the Lord’s Prayer; while the Starlings of Drusus and Britannicus were even able to recite Greek apothegms. All is easy to him; only he soon forgets again what he has learnt, as is the case with many a too lively boy, so that of him it may also be said, “Quickly got, soon forgotten.”

### III.

#### THE WATER FROG.\*

It was a saying of Linnæus, that Nature, which had endowed all other animals in so wondrous a manner, could not boast much of what she had done for the Reptiles. Now if beauty were really the only, or even the highest law in the formations of Nature, we might give our assent to the reproach; for indeed that amphibious race which lurks in morasses, on the banks of rivers, and in forests, can only be compared, as to ugliness, with the lowest grades of the animal creation. The colour of these creatures,—sometimes of a dirty hue, sometimes of an acrid brightness,—their almost always slippery forms,—their creeping, rustling, darting movements,—their indolence and gluttony, have always been found repelling; and when to this is joined such demoniac strength and bloodthirstiness as in the crocodile and serpent, the impression then becomes one of dread. And yet the instinctive repugnance of man to amphibia does not always seem to be well-founded. There are some animals which, if viewed impartially, cease to be

\* *Rana esculenta*.

ugly, and even become attractive. This is principally the case with the Batrachians, though of course not with all. The toad, for example, is always a disgusting sight; and the Pipa of Surinam, with her hideous brood upon her back, inspires the calmest observer with horror.

The Batrachians, to which, besides the toad, the salamander also belongs, are the most numerous of the amphibious animals. A single toad lays more than a thousand eggs; a frog, at least five hundred. That they are capable of becoming a scourge in the land, is recorded in the Bible; and other writers of old have related how whole tribes were obliged to leave their place of residence on account of the prodigious increase of these animals.\* They are to be found in nearly every zone; for while in the tropical forests the bull-frog at nightfall sends forth his dull hollow bellowing, in rivalry with the howling of apes and the noise of crickets, a Lapland summer is also not without its croaking marsh chorus. Their dispersion and quantity are quite in accordance with the number of their varieties. Eighty species of the Frog tribe alone are already known; from the Bellower of Louisiana, which is nearly a foot long, to our Tree-Frog (*Rana arborea*), of an inch and a half in length, not to mention those monsters as large as bears, which once peopled the slime of our earth, when it rose from out the waters.† And, notwithstanding the family likeness, there is a great variety of form. Compare, for instance, the

\* Exodus, ch. viii. Pliny, Hist. Nat. viii. 43. Justin, xv. 2. Ælian, Anim. xvii. 41.

† The old Rabbis, whose views of nature degenerated into the most grotesque monstrosities, tell of a frog which was as large as sixty houses.



Beacon Frog, whose rumbling throat shines in the darkness; the curious Horned Frog, with the ear-like lappets over the eye; the Toad, that gets along with difficulty over fields and groves; and the Triton, with its delicately-shaped tail, darting with a snapping noise hither and thither in its pond. They all belong to the Batrachians in a more extended sense. All these animals too are of a peaceful, harmless nature; and, except a traditional prejudice, there is nothing to be said against them. This may especially be asserted of the Frogs, and of those in particular which are indigenous to the north of Europe. In the following lines a sketch shall be given of the Water-Frog, the most interesting and most widely spread of all the race.

If water animals in general,—those at least that for their whole life are confined to this element,—display less developed faculties than others, our Frog notwithstanding forms an exception. He may be looked upon as a character: in popular stories, fairy tales, and poesy he plays no unimportant part. Full of meaning is the myth of the Frogs of Latona;\* also the fable of their election of a king. Æsop related it to the Athenians, when Pisistratus had usurped the government;† and very lately its influence was put to the test by working it up into a political drama. Aristophanes had already brought the Frog people on the stage, just as two thousand years later it appears to have furnished one of the greatest German satirists with a welcome subject.

\* Ovid, *Metam.* vi. 315.

† See *Phæd.* i. 2. The Middle Ages repeated this fable from the Latin authors, so that there is hardly a poet dealing in examples that has not used it.

Unfortunately, of Fischart's 'Froschgosch' the name alone is preserved; another poem however, which, in the heroic style of the Homeric epic, sings the battle between the Frogs and Mice, affords us a compensation. I mean the 'Batrachomyomachia,' and the new version of it by Rollenhagen. Appearing as it did towards the end of the sixteenth century, 'Froschmäusler' was long, and very justly, a favourite book of Protestant Germany. In 1787, when Prussian troops marched into insurrectionary Holland, a third Frog Epic appeared, as if to show how inexhaustible the subject was. Thus has this race of animals won for itself an inalienable place in poesy; and, beginning with fable and with riddles, runs through the whole round of song.

The Frog must be classed among the comic types of the animal creation. That it should be so, arises chiefly from his resemblance to man. Who is there that has not seen men with frog-like countenances? These are for the most part beardless, short-necked heads, obtusely-shaped faces, with bald pates, a straight or partly flattened nose, prominent eyes, a wide mouth, receding chin, and puffed-up cheeks. If to such physiognomy be joined a fair, round-bellied, abbot-like stature, no single feature will be wanting to make the resemblance perfect. That the Frog's head is always flat, does not lessen the resemblance: it is the eyes, as well as the cheeks, which are mainly instrumental in producing the likeness. With unmistakeable importance do they present themselves: large, round, sprightly, capable of a fixed bold look, and, in certain

species, surrounded by lids. Their colour varies from a deep black to a flaming yellow, and to this perhaps a Greek author refers, when he says, the Frog is an animal void of shame, that never blushes save in its eyes.<sup>90</sup>) But the most beautiful of all, and which really plays in a golden colouring, is the iris of the toad's eye. Like the eye of the cat, the owl, and other nocturnal animals, it exercises an electric power. It has even happened that men, who have endeavoured to withstand the gaze of the toad's eye, have almost sunk fainting to the ground, overcome by its power. In the Frog's head mere indications of a nose and ear are to be seen, while the wide mouth is all the more conspicuous. It is an *os magna sonans*; but as he has no lips, properly so called, the mouth seems closed in silence, and is sometimes marked only by a coloured line and by the under part of the chin, which is generally white.<sup>91</sup>) The head, which is not raised upon a freely-moving neck, is joined immediately to the trunk with slender, delicate articulations. The hind leg is lengthened to an extraordinary degree; indeed, besides the immense toes, no other animal can show so human-looking a leg as the Frog. The formation of the bones and muscles is also the same as in man, the latter forming a perfect calf, while the nakedness of the animal's body causes this resemblance to show the more strikingly. The Frog is indeed an anthropomorphism. Who is there, when bathing, as his comrade skilfully swims past him, has not been reminded of the green-coated paddler, as he jumps from the bank, and with regularly changing

stroke divides the waves? Owing to this very resemblance, a celebrated natural philosopher of the last century was betrayed into describing the petrified skeleton of a Frog of a former age as the bones of an antediluvian man;<sup>92</sup>) and on this account, too, does the fable of the metamorphosis of the Lycian peasants into Frogs take such hold upon our fancy, and strike us as so appropriate. The dress of the Frog is a genuine hunter costume; green as the rushes among which he lives, and changing hue according to the season and circumstances. The Tree-Frog even changes colour every three or four weeks, as the foliage grows darker or paler; so that in Summer and Autumn he passes his time unobserved among the leaves. Besides this, several times a year the garb is entirely changed;—a thin vest, which, if received on a sheet of paper, hardly leaves behind a mark like that of a lead pencil, but which generally is eaten by the Frogs themselves.

Comic and harmless as the Frog is, his gelatinous, sprawling nature, his cold, moist temperature,\* and especially his nakedness, are however disagreeable to us: they excite a feeling of horror, which the German fairy tale has made use of under various circumstances. Nor does the Tree-Frog form an exception. But if we desire to estimate the Frog properly, we must place him beside the Toad. This animal, living silently in dark holes, ugly in colour, misshapen and awkward, is really hideous; and on this account has been invested with a ghostly, fear-inspiring poesy by the superstition of all ages. Rollenhagen how-

\* "As cold as a frog,"—a proverbial expression in Lower Germany.



ever has introduced the toad into his poem, and makes the frogs speak of him in a most ingenious manner. But how much more has he turned Frog nature to account! It is therefore an injustice to the Frog to talk of showing him to advantage only by placing his caricature beside him as a foil. On the contrary, his peculiar nature is seen most favourably when he is among his compeers, in the domain of marsh and rivulet. The water is his element: there it is that he must be seen and heard.

When in Spring the sun sends down his first rays upon the earth, all the sleepers of the deep awake, and with them the Frog. The oppressive dream of Winter is shaken off; he beholds the golden light through the bright mirror now freed from ice, his heart expands, he stretches his limbs, and rises to the surface. There he puts forth his obtuse-angular head, as immovable as a stone, and stares out into the wide world, which is germinating and growing green around him. As yet however he is dumb and faint: he awaits the approach of man with apathy, except when a stone thrown into the water puts it in commotion, and then his feet begin slowly to strike out. As the sun mounts higher in the sky, the Frog displays more energy. He soon makes himself heard, and then the strange chorus replies from all the surrounding waters. Who is there to whom it is not familiar? It is not the rejoicing "Kek! kek!" cry of the tree-frog, still less the hoarse creak of the toad; but is, on the contrary, a broad, comfortable, long-drawn-out tone, in which there is somewhat of the virtuoso. Then follows a fit of laughter, so pier-

cing and in such quickly succeeding peals, that one would fancy the merry company must crack their sides. This water poetry has often been despised, and truly the musicians look droll enough, as they puff up their cheeks, while uttering the fervid sounds; but the *buffo* belongs notwithstanding to the chorus of Spring masqueraders, and his part is not the worst. Röscl von Rosenhof, in his Natural History of Frogs, is very near placing the Frog in the same rank with the quail.

According to an old superstition, his cry forebodes pestilence; and those who are unable to sleep of nights, declare it is a disturber of rest.\* Aristotle too calls it garrulous and foolish; and the author of the Apocalypse sees the evil spirits, which the dragon casts out, rise up in the shape of Frogs. To such complaints and authorities may be opposed the pious feeling of the Mussulman, who reckons the Frog among the number of sacred animals, because he proclaims the praise of Allah.

Let me recall our Summer nights of Northern Germany. When on the wide plain all life is asleep, and the lonesome disquieting groan of the Moor-Frog is all that is heard sounding from afar, like a summons from the nether world, on a sudden the Frog in the pond begins to raise his voice. It is an agreeable tenor. He summons to horary prayers: in a large circle round about him sits the synagogue; when presently a deeper voice, and evidently

\* Horace, on his journey to Brundisium, complains—

“Mali culices ranæque palustres  
Avertunt somnos.”

of one advanced in years, chimes in ; a third joins the chant, and the recitative begins.

A little while, and a pause ensues ; then the precentor sings again alone, some long-drawn responses follow, when suddenly a hurly-burly, that thrills through every fibre, bursts forth in the air. It lasts some minutes, until single solos, in a minor key, disengage themselves from the scattered tones, which soon break forth again in a stormy chorus. Thus does their music last on throughout the whole night, and may be heard for many miles. Yet this, it would seem, is but gentle music, when compared to the uproar which hums in the ear of the traveller, when, on the shores of the Volga and the Caspian Sea, the Frogs in myriads celebrate their marriage-festivals. The bacchic rejoicing of these orgies absorbs everything ; all is grown froggish ; it is as though the very earth were shaking with the rest, unable to resist the inextinguishable laughter.

At this period the female Frogs also have a voice. As soon as the long filament of eggs is safely deposited and made fast to a stalk, and the sun begins to brood on the surface of the water, the female will sit beside the dots of spawn, floating there by hundreds ; and in gentle murmurs, like the purring of a cat, she pours forth her maternal heart. There is really feeling in these tones ; and yet the Frog is not affectionate. The warmth of the sun alone entices the young animals from their ovarian covering. As yet they are but latent frogs, mere frog novices, consisting solely of a head and tail, swimming about quite unprotected ; at last however, with self-acquired strength,

the youthful tail is cast off, and the *toga virilis* put on, by which act the entry upon Froghood is accomplished.

They then delight to join in the varying chorus of their parents, or to bask with them on the bank. They sit up on the grass like little dogs, idling away the hours, yet keeping a sharp look-out; or they rock themselves merrily in a hammock of bulrushes, or take a siesta beneath the shady roof of a mushroom.\* But suddenly, if a fly approaches, the curious, sticky tongue is darted forward, and the pert intruder is caught. No fluttering of wings is of any avail to get loose from the clammy snare, for it is drawn back again in an instant. They sometimes, too, venture a jump at a chafer or butterfly; they will even make an attempt upon the sparrow that comes to drink. For, be it observed, the long hind legs are not oars merely, but also leaping poles, by means of which the splashing body can swing itself forward in vigorous leaps. It is natural enough that women and children should run away screaming, when the creature suddenly jumps out of its hiding-place, although the fright is on the Frog's side; for his usually merry heart palpitates with fear at man's approach. To him therefore, as to most animals whose safety consists not in defence but flight, Nature has given a most delicately susceptible ear. Hardly does a footstep rustle through the grass, when—plump! the whole row leap into the water, and away from the shore: they then feel themselves safe. As soon as all suspicious appearances

\* Hence mushrooms and fungi, especially certain poisonous sorts, are called in the Altmark, "Poggenstöl" (*Toadstool*).



have vanished, the noisy gaiety begins again: they return to the land, or rival each other in all sorts of hydraulic tricks and various pastimes.

Despite his peaceful nature, the Frog has many enemies. Above all, the stealthily moving stork is the most dangerous, who likes best to surprise him at night, when at his rendezvous. The crow too makes war upon him; and even from men the persecuted creature is not safe. His delicate calves are dainties to the epicure;\* and those cruel tormentors, who call themselves the priests of Science, sacrifice to their goddess hundreds of Frogs. How many breathe their last beneath the exhauster of the air-pump! how many are dissected by the knife of the anatomist! Even on the half-killed the galvanic battery tries its power.

This, after all, is but a corroboration of what was said above of the attractive nature of the Frog. The wonderful transformations through which the Frog passes, to escape from the egg a fish-like, silent, gilled animal, and then to become a Stentor with powerful lungs,—these changes even would be enough to ensure him the notice of man. Why should the butterfly, bursting from the chrysalis, be alone the image of immortality, and not the Frog as well? He has besides a prognosticating sense,† which reveals to him when Jupiter Pluvius opens the flood-gates of heaven,

\* A French cook, in the time of the Empire, gained, by his peculiar method of preparing frog-pasties only, a fortune of 200,000 francs.

† Cicero writes to Atticus (xv. 16): “Pluvias metuo, si prognostica nostra vera sunt; ranæ enim *ρητορεύουσιν*.” In Northern Germany, the husbandman says: “When the frog croaks nine evenings following, there will be a good buckwheat harvest.”

and when, after cloudy days, Phœbus again comes up the sky in his golden chariot. Rightly therefore does he enjoy prophetic authority. He is moreover docile and susceptible of instruction; he distinguishes persons, knows his benefactors, hears and follows their call. The shy toad even will do this. It is true, the fable accuses the Frog of puffing himself up and being a swaggerer, and of having a propensity for tattling and slander; but is it not a peculiarity of this sort of poesy to make animals the representatives of human failing, but never of human virtue? Let us not forget Mohammed, who knew better how to appreciate these despised animals, and commanded them to be respected, for having saved Abraham from a fiery death. For when the Chaldeans had thrown the patriarch into the flames, in order to kill him, Frogs came compassionately to the rescue, spat water into the fire, and extinguished it. Thus relates the Koran.

As in the height of Summer the singers of the fields grow mute, so also does the Frog. He conceals himself in his hole, the spiritual part of him falls asleep, as if he had drunk of Lethe: the whole animal is changed. Without food or fresh air, there he lies and freezes; to rise up again, as a Spring-born child of earth, into new existence. Thus, for the space of twice ten years, does his life endure, divided between the joys of Summer and a long Winter sleep.

#### IV.

#### THE FOX.

THE shower is passing, the woods are shaking the warm rain-drops from their summits, and from the heath a refreshing and spicy fragrance rises through the evening air. In every retreat feet and wings are on the move. The gnats begin their dance, the emmets creep forth to repair their flooded highway, the chaffinch is warbling from the top of the beech-tree, the hare is at her capers, and the Fox also feels a secret inward stirring. He is on the watch, yonder, between the roots of an old oak : he scents something. There is nothing to fear : all Nature, drunken with the influence of Spring, is revelling in the cooler air. With a single bound Reynard is at the threshold : now you can see him distinctly. How he stands there ! With what an air of high-bred lassitude, and how conscious of his own importance ! You see at a glance that noble blood rolls in his veins ; but all clumsy prejudice about rank is long since overcome, all constraint set aside : there is about him that *savoir vivre* which allows him at any moment to fling off his dignity, because he feels certain

of being able at any moment to resume it. With such a character it is worth while to observe both physiognomy and dress somewhat more closely, for here nothing is insignificant.

The cranium of the Fox may be called a model skull. The forehead is horizontal, the skin tightly drawn over it, craft lurking in its very smoothness. The ear, sharply pointed at the extremity, projects considerably at the base, in order to catch every passing sound. It is made for obtaining the faintest trace of the booty slumbering in the trees above: the slightest noise, the trembling of a leaf, the quiver of the dreaming bird, falls into the listening, distended aperture: nothing escapes him. And then the nose! How much malice and grace, how much *esprit*, lies in that fine, long stretched-out, supple point! Does it not seem as if a thousand invisible feelers issued thence, and that here, as its central point, sat the guile-conning, wile-contriving spirit of the incomparable improvisator? It is such a nose as the great masters of political science, as the Richelieus and Talleyrands, may perhaps have had. But the most interesting face is nothing if we forget the eyes. It is true, the Fox's eye cannot be termed beautiful. You recognize in it, at once, the nocturnal animal of prey: its colour plays between a grey and green; it lies askant, half-hidden in the cavity, and by day is drawn together into a mere perpendicular chink. It has neither the green-wood freshness which appeals to us so gaily in the eye of the roe, nor the rolling sparkle which gives the gaze of the cat such a magnetic charm: yet notwithstand-



ing there lies in it far more physiognomical significance. Now it is lowered in humble resignation, or gazes round in simplicity and innocence; now a derisive smile plays about the lids, and then again a look is darted forth, keen and venomous, as though you had been struck suddenly by the fangs of a viper. Moist with unappeased greediness, flaming with murderous lust, tenderly languishing as a sentimental *amoroso*, it conceals a world of passion and of craft; and the Fox is perhaps the most accomplished actor the animal creation has to show.

All the other parts of the countenance and the body are in unison with this picture. The mouth stretches wide, for the Fox is a robber; a spare beard\* is ranged around the upper lip in long receding points, like so many barbed hooks; those lips too are finely cut, and closed,—they indicate energy and self-command. But if they move apart, the sharp white teeth, from which no living thing escapes, then glisten fiercely; or half-scornfully, half-gnashing with rage, a hoarse,† cough-like, snapping bark is heard. Swift feet carry the slender, hanging body almost trackless over the ground; and his bushy train<sup>93</sup>) is a stately ornament, beneath which is concealed the scent-bottle, that in time of need is often his only consolation. On his breast the Fox wears a delicately white chemisette: his fur gleams red and golden; hence he was called *Vuhs*,

\* Scanty as it is, the Fox sets much value on this beard. In Reinhardt, he swears by it a great oath, despite the Emperors Charles and Otho.

† The Fox-cough (*toux de renard*) is become proverbial in France. "He has the fox's cough," is the same as "He is on his last legs." "To become a fox," means, in Agricola, to die and be buried.

which means the fiery-coloured ; and after him, too, were named those bright, nimble gold-pieces, which also, like the Fox, escaped by more ways than one.

Thus does the cunning one\* go creeping, slinking, and winking through life ; he bends and wends, is cautious, patient, persevering, agile, and ever resolute : the master of a hundred arts, a freethinker without long phrases, a tempter full of wit, a Proteus of virtue and vice, whom one cannot help loving and hating in the same breath.<sup>94</sup>)

Such an animal genius is not to be put off with a few insipid words. An heroic life, that displays the greatest strength and the most brilliant wit, when every source seems exhausted ; which is instructive, poetical, new and great under outrage and in adversity, in difficulty and death,—such a life must be studied, admired, loved ! It offers matter for an Odyssey. And as such it has been sung. What the great Alexander most desired for himself, has fallen to the lot, in fullest measure, of this waggish Ulysses of a Malepartus. In the aboriginal forests was attuned the song of Reynard's adventures, the delight of our ancestors ; and it has maintained itself in youthful freshness through every age, and will never die as long as there are natures who can enjoy the humour and the stratagems of the inexhaustible jester. It was this subject-matter that afforded the Muse of Germany's greatest poet refreshment in a period of gloom, and on which he tested his poetic power. From the domain of this tradi-

\* *Reginhardt* (French, *Renard*), a contraction of *Reinhart* : as diminutive, *Reineke*,—the “cunning one,” the “crafty counsellor.”

tion, plastic art, since oldest times, has loved to chisel the boldest scenes; in the porch of the cathedral, some hidden corner was willingly accorded them,<sup>95</sup>) and the well-known figures of Reynard and his associates peer at us with too much *sans-culotte* audacity, for it to be possible to fling over them an allegorical drapery. And he too—need I name him?—who, in his compositions from the old poem, handed down to us from so many generations, has given us another new one not less delectable! A glance at Kaulbach's pictures must suffice to convince even the most arrant proser how inexhaustible is this poetical popular treasure.

But to return to our Fox,—still leaning against his doorpost. He appears as if he intended to dream away the evening in sweet inactivity. Meanwhile, two or three young Foxes make their appearance beside him. With cautious scrutiny they peer around, lie down in the sun, and begin all sorts of pastime. The youngest son is still somewhat awkward. He is catching grasshoppers and beetles, pulls their wings and lets them sprawl about; snuffs at them, throws them away, and then occasionally performs a clumsy somerset. The thing is, his father just now is looking another way. His eyes are fixed on the two other hopeful youths, in whom, with evident satisfaction, he recognizes himself. They have overheard the gently listening mouse, and with rivalling bound have caught the fugitive. In wanton jollity they toss it from one to the other, pinch it here, pinch it there, till, tired of the plaything, they leave it to their youngest brother.

Now they are on the look-out for a nest, to steal upon a hedge-sparrow, to lay hold of the slippery frog, or they rummage the palace of a tribe of wasps; for, dainty as they are, their palate will still have a taste of everything. Aristotle even speaks of the universality of their appetite.

The mother now steps out of the dwelling, and the old Fox remembers it is time to put an end to the family scene. He gets ready; however, his motto is, 'Speed with heed.' With his tail dragging after him in true cavalier style, he lounges passively, through bush and cabbage-field, and always in a slanting direction. For as a true genius scorns to tread in another's footsteps, so he quits the high-road, losing himself among the reed-grass, corn, and hedge, where gay flowers are in blossom and merry birds a-singing. Humourist as he is, he loves crooked lines, and that tolerance which almost borders on absence of mind; and so on he loiters in guileless unconstraint, gently musing, like a humorous author, who, with hands behind his back, weaves his fancies as he paces up and down. His countenance betrays the rosiest humour: thoughts, pictures, and visions are dancing round him like flakes in a snowstorm. Meanwhile he has come into the midst of the preserve. He creeps along more slowly, more softly, and with greater caution. The evening breathes coolly from every stem and leaf. The summits of the trees rise motionless in the silence; the throats of the birds alone are still heard. The thrush is calling in clear tones: the titmouse, chirping its little pert song, passes from bush to bush; the carpenter woodpecker is chopping



and hammering at an old oak-stump; suddenly the jay's screech is heard, with a strange jeering flourish; and when again all is quite still, from the depth of the green solitude there groans the melancholy cry of the pewit. Reynard has reached the border of the glade: he listens. The flowers bend their calyces, here and there a bee still is humming, or a chafer, in heavy armour, buzzing drowsily, sweeps by in bold circles,—a humming-top that the elves are driving through the air.

A crackling is now heard among the branches. The Fox pricks up his ears: a low whistle is audible. A roe steps forth, her head raised on high, and her eyes turning in every direction. Again a whistle is heard, and with graceful bounds the kid is at its mother's side. With the drollest and prettiest gambols it plays round her, now brushing away a leaf or blade of grass as it rushes by, and then kneeling down to suck. The mother licks its neck caressingly. But presently the roe lifts her head. Her eyes sparkle, a trembling passes over her sides, she makes a bound or two, and then stamps passionately with her hoofs. It is evident she has got wind of the robber. He has stolen softly along, gently, most gently; keeping undeviatingly the kid always in his eye. A bold stroke, and all is won;—if only the dam had not just then barred the way! But Reynard is not to be confounded: he pretends to be lost in reverie. Dreamily musing, he gazes upon vacancy. Not a feature betrays that he has got sight of his prey. He then vanishes, in order, by describing a large circle, to come round on an-

other side, and attempt an attack. However, the watchful mother presses closer to her little one, for she knows the lurker's cunning. See, yonder he is slinking past. The roe whistles again, and the Fox looks up, as though



startled and afraid. Yet, meanwhile he has got nearer and nearer to the object of his desires. The moment is favourable, and deception no longer necessary. Reynard cowers down; he crouches on the ground like a

cat; his brush quivers convulsively; his eyes stare with fierce greediness on the trembling animal; he shows his murderous fangs, gently raises his head and foot for the spring and bite: a moment only—a bound, and suddenly the mother rushes on the robber, trampling him with her feet. The fawn is saved. Reynard turns homeward, lame and burning with rage. He swears vengeance on the fugitive, and it is to be feared he will find means to keep his vow.

When the sun enters the Lion, then is the Golden Age of the Fox. Luxuriant, ripening calm is spread over the earth; the ears of corn hang down heavy and yellow, an endless grove of fruit. The Fox is inclined to enter it. Hares and rabbits are crouched there, partridges, quails, and larks; little people without arms or defence, who lead an idyllic and industrious life. Ah! it will fare ill with them now. He, the crafty one, can bait and can wait, can cower and devour, and knows how with guile and deep wile to scare and ensnare.\* Their little arts are all in vain;

\* There is a charming scene by Grandville, in which friend Reineke declares his love to a hen, a nice piece of simplicity from the country. It is evident he has long cherished a passion for this chaste beauty, without venturing to give it words. His smart is now grown unbearable; he must venture a disclosure. It is morning; the air blows sharp and soberingly; a clodhopper of a dog, smoking a pipe, sticks his coarse, knobby, thief-taker face out of the hut: in short, the auspices for a declaration are as unfavourable as possible; but Reineke cares no longer for any considerations. With his *carbonari* thrown picturesquely over his shoulder, in enthusiastic attitude,—with sentimental looks, half Werther, half Don Juan,—he implores the charmer, who is all the more charming in her rural *négligé*. He declaims, he calls all the gods to witness,—in vain! The

he goes on murdering night and day, and his cubs, as they grow older, get fatter and bolder. When he has made himself comfortable, the bee-hive on the sunny flat beckons to him invitingly. He springs upwards, laps the spicy drops, even though the whole swarm should buzz round him in their fury: he laughs at their sting, and, receiving them on his fur, rolls himself on the ground, crushes and eats them, so that at last the busy hoarders are obliged to resign to him the sweet store, and desert their house and home. Or he steals into the orchard, where, amid the foliage, red-cheeked apples and black cherries allure him, tastes the grapes\* in the vineyard, or he lies in ambush near the brook, to go halves with the heron in his booty, or to tickle the cray-fish with his brush, and coax him out of his watery cave into the light.

Thus does his Lazzaroni life continue until Autumn. When the cool morning haze descends upon the woods, and with it the flocks of migratory birds, he then is off to the copse, where all sorts of dramatic impromptus are performed. The gamekeeper has set the springes; the red berries of the ash are carefully sprinkled about, alluring many a thrush to untimely death. Reynard knows this well. Before the hunter is awake, he is on

cold one has no heart in her breast. Reineke, the irresistible, gets a scornful refusal.—See also ‘The Nineteenth Century of the Animal Kingdom’ (Leipsic, 1842), in which there is a lithograph of the above. The original work, ‘Scènes de la Vie privée et publique des Animaux,’ the text of which is much more racy, is unknown to me.

\* In Solomon’s Song,—“Take us the little foxes, that spoil the vines.” Roman epicures fattened foxes with grapes, and considered them a delicacy.



the watch. He waits, unwearied, till the voices of the tired and hungry birds, as they pounce upon the food, sounds in his ear. He stops, starts, and gazes fixedly. Here and there a longing couple flutter round the snare; a fieldfare, a glossy blackbird, dashes into it, screams out, flutters its wings, and in an instant, with nimble bound, Reynard is on the spot. Up he leaps, for the springe is high: only a hair's breadth more, and he would have reached it. The bird, caught by the feet, flutters upward in its flight, to escape the claws of the murderer. The Fox gnashes his teeth, leaps up again and again, more passionate, more greedy; his nostrils contract convulsively, a voluptuous rage glows in his eyes, he lashes the air with his brush, but all in vain; until at last, the strength of the imprisoned bird forsaking him, Reynard collects all his energy for a mighty bound, and seizes on his victim with a triumphant cry.

But the golden days soon pass. The fields are bare, the forests destitute of foliage, the last birds too have departed, and bleak tempests rave over the waste. The Fox lies in his cell, for there is little to be hunted now, and the collected stores preserve him as yet from want. He has a dull and tiresome time of it; he could now write his memoirs, 'The Recollections of a Fox,' did he not still thirst for action, and if rude reality touched him not too painfully to allow him to withdraw into the shadow of the past. Instead of this, he forms a plan for the winter campaign, sets himself problems, practises his leaps, and listens attentively to the shots of the sports-

man, which sound with a dull, warning roar into the very recesses of his dwelling. Meantime Winter advances with more and more impetuosity. Soon everything is lying beneath a white covering; lakes and rivulets freeze to a great depth; the trees, rent by the frost, crack and split; the game groans hungrily in the densest bottoms; and raven, crow, and sparrow have long ago sought the streets of towns and villages. Reynard dare not do this. "I wish I were a little bird," sighs he, and prowls round the back of a farmyard. But not a feather is to be seen. Necessity drives him to the woods, and on he walks plunged in the gloomiest thoughts. On a sudden he raises his nose: his eyes flash: a sweet savour is borne gently towards him. Ha! what is it? Behold, in the midst of the hungry wilderness a delicious roasted morsel of pussy's haunch. How appetising! It is devoured without hesitation. Reynard feels his vital spirits aroused anew, his eyes grow brighter, and as if impelled by an invisible power he trots forwards. And verily there lies a second morsel! It is no phantom of the imagination; it is the same savour, the same flesh and bone. Reynard pauses; astonishment and suspicion in his features. Who was, who is, the unknown benefactor? Have the days of Fairyland returned? With shy steps he creeps round the spot, again pauses, crouches down, listens, casts his eyes searchingly on every side, and jumps up again to crouch down once more. There is not a sound; the old firs only are making a grating noise: there is not a trace except the passing hieroglyphics which the finger of the wind has written on the snow.

He considers the morsel again : “ If it were a trap ? the children of men are full of cunning ! Through their craft many a noble heart has fallen. But no ; away with such imaginings ! ” and in an instant the second piece is also swallowed.

Oh, Reineke, Reineke, thou art lost ! for yonder lies a third morsel. The poor hunger-racked creature swallows the intoxicating aroma in full draughts, while with glossy eye he stares at the bait. But the inner voice makes itself heard once more. And again the Fox moves circling round the dainty meal ; again he cowers, lays his ears forwards, backwards, then pricks them up, and makes himself sure that on every side it is quite safe. And again all is mute : the firs grate on morosely : it is as if Nature held her breath. The Fox begins to sophisticate ; but the longer he looks on the fatal dish, the more confused grow his thoughts, the more confused his gaze. All is glimmering before his eyes ; the savour bewilders him ; he cannot free himself : he must—and though it cost his life—he must approach. With one wild bound he leaps towards it, when—crack ! the iron clasps its crushing teeth together.

And so then the crafty one was not sufficiently cunning ! He howls with rage ; but this is no moment for weak complaint—there is peril in delay. A bold deed is called for.

“ His leg is caught by the iron grim ;  
To save his life he forfeits his limb,  
And off he cuts it, though great the smart :  
He has a bold and courageous heart.”—*Laube*.

"It is the first time I have been caught," thinks he, "and it shall be the last;"<sup>96</sup>) and away he goes, bounding freely, as if he had only pulled off a boot. The defeat must teach his genius new arts, and the achievement of new victories.

Such is Reineke, the hero! His sagacity and cunning may rank beside the strength and courage of the lion; and if we are not disposed to agree with the German fable, which lets the grim king of beasts be overmatched by him, we may still coincide with the saying of the Spartan politician,\* who advised donning a fox-pelt where the lion's skin cannot be used. Verily the Fox is worthy of admiration; but nobler still and far more admirable must he appear to us when we remember that he has been found starved to death before the trap's seductive morsel,—starved in presence of the most luscious food. A Roman could not die more worthily, or more resigned.

\* This saying, as is well known, is attributed to Lysander.



## V.

### THE LOBSTER AND CRAY-FISH.

MARVELLOUS and dreadful are the realms of those imperfect animals whose dark existence is passed in the bowels of the earth and in the waters. The eye of the naturalist even, although accustomed betimes to dispense with forms of beauty, turns aside with fear when peering down into this chaos. For every monstrous birth that the darkness could bring forth is to be found collected here, especially in the depths of the ocean. There, every wave is haunted by some mysterious life. Misshapen clods, swollen bubbles, strangely-gnarled roots, limbless though they be, tumble themselves blindly along. Greedy clutching arms are stretched out, countless feelers spread around, glittering thorny points stick up, and there is a rolling and gushing, and the strange things grope about, and snatch, and grasp. All is horrid confusion. We may well exclaim with the poet :—

“Let him rejoice  
Who breathes above in the roseate light ;  
Below all is horror, and dread, and night.”

Yet among these caricatures and monstrosities, inter-

esting characteristic formations are not wanting: beside the fearful stands a comic shape, and something exciting horror close to what is pretty. Here the snails and shell-fish deserve particular notice. In the abundance of their multifarious forms they display a perfect architecture of Lilliputian towers, spiral stairs, ships, arabesques;—a complete petrified flora, to which colour and drawing give quite a peculiar, radiant charm. And yet these delicate forms have naturally no importance when taken singly; it is only in masses, as the mosaic of the great ocean palace, that they produce an effect. Moreover it is the glittering, many-tinted, curiously built house only, and not the animal dwelling within it, which attracts our attention. Not far from these however, the ugly race of Crustaceous animals presents, on the other hand, two varieties which are not without interest, displaying, besides, some comic features worthy our attention. These are the Lobster (*Hommarus*), and his near kinsman the Cray-fish, or fresh-water Crab.

If it be only possible to hint merely at the characteristic features in the lives of these animals, they possess notwithstanding qualities sufficiently remarkable to justify the admission of their portrait here. First of all, that repulsive spider-like appearance, which distinguishes the other crustaceous animals, is hardly observable in either of these; the gelatinous softness of the covering has hardened into a metallic firmness; the weapons they carry are hardly dangerous; and finally, both rank as original, from their determined passion for walking backwards.

It is only fair that the Cray-fish should take the place of honour. Everybody likes his flesh; and even the child knows the nursery riddle, "Black in the kitchen, red on the table." On the banks of rivers and brooks, where alders and dead trunks of trees weave their network of roots in the mud, in deep holes, next-door neighbour to the smooth-tailed rat, there dwells the Cray-fish. He is always in harness, heavily armed to the teeth. Morion and cuirass are in one piece, but seven-jointed is the cunningly forged mail of his back, ending in a border like a fin. Beneath this protecting roof move four, ay nine pair of sprawling feet, pushing forward the unwieldy war-engine, like the Roman legionary gasping under the shelter of the battering-ram. In front a pair of fine-toothed forceps stand threateningly; the foot is metamorphosed into a fist, consisting, it is true, of thumb and little finger only, but which nevertheless is a good hold-fast. Before the pointed nose, long, wire-like feelers are stretched out; and the large black eyeballs turn round on their fine supporters; so that the strange-looking head has about it something almost like a flower. Finally, the interior conceals a stone, Æsculapius's precious gift, in appearance like a white eye, and abounding in magic power.\*

Thus does the troglodyte brood on in heavy repose, out of which night alone can lure him. He then displays a talent for swimming: many a frog, many a little sleeping

\* The superstitious only now make use of these lime-like stones. In Russia they are much employed. On the Volga the Cray-fish are caught in great numbers, and left to die in the sun, in order to collect the so-called crabs'-eyes out of the putrid mass.

fish, becomes his prey ; and even the snail, in its rolling fortress, is not secure from his grasp. But in preference to the living animal he will attack what is putrifying, and a whole crowd of them may often be found in the rotting remains of a pike. Cray-fish therefore would be considered by the Jews even more unclean than the pig. Sometimes they fall upon each other : their fight is an awkward wrestling, and pulling, and pinching, without rage and without passion, with neither courage nor heroism, as if the body alone, but not the heart, were doing battle. Altogether the Cray-fish, like most aquatic animals and such as prowl at night, is a melancholy, phlegmatic creature. He seems to know nothing of the burning impulse of hate nor lust of power, still less of those finer ones, vanity and jealousy, not to mention others. Greediness alone impels the indolent mass. On this account it is long-lived and difficult to kill ; its aquatic nature withstands even the sharpness of vinegar and spirits-of-wine for several hours. Below, in his element, he reaches the age of twice ten years, and loses a foot or claw without feeling ill. He well knows they will grow again. He is caught in the daytime, and by means of lights at night. He must be seized boldly ; if he is caught hold of timidly, and by one claw only, and not both at the same time, then—a second Scævola—he coolly sacrifices that one, and retreats backwards to his lagunes. The inflexible body has suddenly become elastic ; the broad tail bends underneath the body like a spring, and strikes the water so forcibly, that the retreat follows in a swift, darting motion. But often the



attacked party digs its way into the mud. There is a sort of land-crab which, when attacked, lays its right claw, in size greater than the whole body, across the entrance of its retreat, so that no enemy can approach.

It is comic enough to see how Cray-fish, when caught, sprawl about in the dish. They do not know what has happened to them, and stumble over each other in their heavy boots; some over-inquisitive ones venture up to the slippery edge of the vessel, fall down, and, if you take hold of them, clutch the air with their vengeful claws, and loudly flap their belly with their tail. They emit the while a humming or rather crackling, it might almost be termed a sticky sound,—a discontented inward murmur, resembling the buzzing of certain beetles. It ceases however as soon as another noise attracts their attention. For the Cray-fish can hear; he is the first animal in which the ear is visible.\* This endowment raises him considerably in rank, though it does seem an exaggeration to wish to make a friend of music out of him. He is, too, very susceptible of light: he has a feeling for it, though only negatively, and this lures him often into the net. Moreover he sympathizes with the electric powers of nature, for during thunder-storms he bursts forth from his obscurity, with his heart full of dismal thoughts about the destruction of the world.

\* The organs of hearing of the Cray-fish form, at the base of the outward pair of feelers, an obtuse prominence, whose round opening is covered by the tympanum, which generally is slit in the middle. Behind this lies a thin bladder, filled with a clear liquid, and the neck of which projects in front to the tympanum, and is connected behind with a green glandular canal.

Thus we see the Cray-fish moves already in the higher walks of terrestrial life: he has a certain personality. He is brave, persevering, resolute even to stubbornness, and rises exceptionally even to cunning (in a German fable he outwits the fox); while, with all the creature's apathy and greediness, the mother Cray-fish shows something like maternal feeling. Not only does she carry her eggs about with her, but partly also the newly hatched young, and perhaps even she toys with them. At least, it is known that the short-tailed crab of the island of Moen likes to play with pebbles and empty snail-shells, as cats are fond of diverting themselves with balls and skeins of cotton.

As the river to the sea, so is the relative position of the Cray-fish and the Lobster. He is longer by half a foot than the common Cray-fish race:\* he is a Cray-fish on a grand scale,—from head to foot an ocean potentate. His armour sparkles as though it were cast in metal; he reminds one of the Horned Siegfried, of the iron-bound knights of the Middle Ages, of the combatants before Troy clad in steel; and we need not have been surprised if to him Father Homer had compared an Ajax or Diomedes. The Dutch painters have glorified him all the oftener in imperishable colours. There is scarcely a picture of a Flemish market or kitchen in which the Lobster is forgotten; scarcely a painting of still life, portraying the pleasures of

\* Some reach an extraordinary size: they are to be found a yard long. These mammoths had doubtless their origin in a long extinct generation, surviving however to the time of late posterity. Their feelers are grown into perfect rods, the feet hung round with long, shaggy tufts, dense moss, fungus, and snails having settled on the old grey ruin.

the table, in which, beside the glittering wine-glass, the Lobster also does not parade in his fiery harness, instead of laurel, sweetly garlanded with parsley's pleasing green. And this is natural enough. The Lobster, in his sad purple, with the proudly curved line of his back, his large feelers outstretched like sceptres, cannot but have, both for culinary artist and for animal painter, an air of majesty; and is well adapted to shine on the board as chief and central object. Add to this, there is, in his appearance, something thoroughly foreign; and he is one of the few animals that are served up in quite a natural state, and, from this very circumstance, has occasioned the manner of uncasing him to be already laid down in a certain ritual:

"First put aside his mantle red,  
As by wood-craft establishèd;"

which may be said not of the stag only, but of the Lobster also.

The same peculiarities are to be found in the Lobster as in the Cray-fish, only on a larger scale. He has his rocky hole at a depth of from six to twelve fathoms, and the propagation of his race is carried on in a truly marvellous manner.<sup>97)</sup> In a single female, more than twelve thousand eggs have been counted. Inactive as soon as he reaches the light, in his own realm he dashes with rapid speed over the rocky table-lands and chasms of the ocean. A blow of his tail is sufficient to hurl him down more than fifty feet deep, and thus escape the swiftest pursuer. And so sure is this leap, that even in the most precipitous flight, the Lobster never misses the entrance of his cavern, although it offers merely space enough to admit his body.

But the Lobster is not only stronger and quicker, but also more sagacious than the Cray-fish. Thus he seems to live sociably, and to undertake expeditions in company.<sup>98)</sup> When hunting, he resorts to stratagem, should his strength be insufficient: his battles with the shell-fish often afford an interesting spectacle. In vain the oyster closes his door against the grasping claw of the Lobster. He will lie in ambush; and, as soon as the unsuspecting mollusc opens its house, he pops a stone into it in a second. The breach is made—the oyster must surrender.

The Lobster displays great susceptibility for magnetism. If he is placed on his head in the sand, and certain passes with the finger be made over him, he becomes magnetized and instantly falls asleep. He will then stand for some minutes as numb as a piece of wood. Suddenly he tumbles down, and, waking up, sprawls about with his feet, claws, and feelers.\* The excitability of his nervous system shows itself especially during thunder-storms and sea engagements. The sound of the thunder and the cannon penetrates to his retreat, and makes him tremble, and has such an effect on him that, in his terror, he jerks away his claws. Freebooters have often turned this to account, by threatening the poor Norwegian fishermen, who live from the Lobster-fishery, with a cannon-shot, in order to force from them a part of their draught.

The operation of casting the skin, which the Lobster has in common with all crustaceous animals, is also a curious phenomenon. First the cuirass of the animal opens exactly in the middle of the back, like the bark of a tree

\* The river-crab shows a like sensibility.



bursting asunder. Then the thick, soft trunk, to which all the limbs are attached like branches, drags itself out : the tail behind, the claws in front, and the feet follow below ; all by degrees leaving their old case. The whole operation lasts three days. The most difficult part is the passage of the claws, as the whole of the broad hand must be squeezed through the narrow shoulder-joint. But the flesh at this time is almost as soft and elastic as India-rubber. As the animal pushes and shakes with its body, it becomes, in that narrow passage, like a thin thread, to return afterwards with a bound to its original shape. Occasionally however, when a Lobster tries to cast his shell too quickly, the mass gets torn, a limb remains sticking in the slough, and he is thenceforth obliged to contrive with a single claw, which is then both weapon and anchor. But if the metempsychosis has succeeded, and the Lobster appears again in renewed youth and beauty, then can we imagine what the joy of the bell-founder may be, when the metal cast gleams without blemish from out the midst of the shivered form. But the expenditure of so much strength has left the Lobster quite exhausted. Shy and feeble, and stripped of his armour, he retires to his lurking-place, until the new harness be somewhat hardened and calcined. Of his own brothers he is specially afraid ; for these, thorough robbers as they are, fall on the tender, unprotected comrade, and devour him without scruple, neck and crop.



## NOTES.

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1. "Antiquity knew only of a reference to gods and heroes : its gaze was always upwards." (*Gervinus.*) To the ancients, "inanimate" Nature was but an external aid to an external aim. A hasty glance was at most bestowed on it, as a mere accessory,—as the scene on which the world's destinies were enacted. How characteristic is it that Socrates did not care to take a walk, because nothing was to be learned from trees or animals ! It is true, the ancient myth comprises all Nature in its sphere : Æolus commands the army of the winds, Naiads slumber in the grottoes where the rivulets have their source, and from the green branches Dryads peep forth, etc. But this animation has always an abstract semblance, and is, at all events, far different from the intense feeling with which the German mind enters into the mysterious life of the powers of Nature. "If the Greek acknowledges the existence of something higher in these powers, it is however not their outward appearance, but the divinity ruling therein, which he reverences and represents ; and this, not in the form of tree, wave, cloud, or mountain, but in a human form, the most noble of which he has any knowledge." (*Carus : Letters on Landscape Painting.*) "He places, with a strongly-marked line of separation however, the spiritualized-personified part of the things, plastically transformed (as personage), beside the thing itself, which seems added only as a mere attribute, as a symbol." (*Stahr.*) It was in its decline that Antiquity approached nearer the romance of modern culture, as is proved by the Alexandrine literature and the later artificial poetry of Rome. See also Humboldt's 'Kosmos,' second part.

2. It is not unlikely that this wondrously quick process of growth and decay gave rise to that fairy tale of the Middle Ages, of trees which daily, at sunrise, start out of the earth, and sink down again and disappear at eve. The hero Alexander, when traversing the fabulous land of India, does not forget to give an account of these to his beloved mother and his wise preceptor at home. See Lamprecht's 'Alexander,' and the metrical version of the said letter in Osterwald's Poems.

Wenn durch die Nacht die Sonne war gedrungen  
 Und alle Stern' erblaßten,  
 War Baum an Baum der Erde dort entsprungen.  
 Sie schossen schnell und mächtig  
 Empor aus grünem Grunde,  
 Und wuchsen also prächtig,  
 Daß sie beschatteten die weite Runde,  
 Und ließen Frucht im Laube lieblich blinken,  
 Bis wir zur neunten Stunde  
 Sie wieder sahen in die Erde sinken.

What time the sun had freed him from Night's prison,  
 And all the stars were waning,  
 From the earth, yonder, tree on tree had risen.  
 They shot up strong and quickly  
 From out the verdant glade,  
 And grew so tall and thickly  
 That far around them they did cast their shade;  
 And from between the foliage fruit was winking  
 Till the ninth hour; beginning then to fade,  
 Into the earth again we saw them sinking.

3. I cannot refrain from subjoining the hymn which Anastasius Grün sings to the Palm:—

Wohl ist das Land noch fern! Ein schmales Band  
 Liegt's auf des Horizontes weitem Rand;  
 Ein blauer Strich nur steigt daraus hervor:  
 Ragt Obelisk, Thurm oder Säul' empor?



Jetzt sind sie nah! Ein Baum ist 's nur! Es steigt  
Einsam sein Riesenschaft; hoch oben zweigt  
Ein Dom von Laub, als sei gestellt hinauf  
Ein Tempel auf des Obelisken Knauf!

Mauritia ist 's, die Palm', im lauen Wind  
Des Wipfels grüne Fächer wiegend lind!  
Die Krone säuselt aus den luft'gen Höhn,  
Wie Menschenwort, harmonisches Getön:

„Willkommen, Fremdling! Sprich, was thut dir Noth?  
Verlangst du Brot, sieh' meine Frucht ist Brot,  
Und dürstet dich, trink' meinen Palmenwein,  
Ich will dein Acker, Duell und Weinberg sein!

„Bist nackt du, web' ein Kleid aus meinem Bast,  
Und schläferst dich, ruh' unter mir mein Gast,  
Mein Schatten wirkt dir Decken leicht und nett,  
Ich will dir Wollenheerde sein und Bett!

„Willst beten du, wölb' ich dir grünen Dom,  
Und willst du schaun auf Land und Meeresstrom,  
Von meinen Höhn siehst du 's in Fried' und Sturm;  
Ich will dir Kirche sein und Wart' und Thurm!

„Sieh hier wildfreie Söhne der Natur!  
Ich bin ihr Reich, ihr Haus und ihre Flur!  
Auf Wieg' und Brauthett senk' ich Palmenreis,  
Ihr Sterblied säußl' ich einst als Glocke leis.

„Schwämmst du als Diogen im Fasse her,  
Rasch schwing' an 's Land den Fuß! Doch stoß in 's Meer  
Dein Faß zurücke mit dem andern Fuß;  
Denn deine Tonne selbst ist Ueberfluß.“

Land surely is not far! A narrow ledge,  
It leans on the horizon's distant edge;  
A blue streak merely rises in the sky:  
Does obelisk, tower, or column mount on high?  
Now they are near!—'T is but a tree! It rears  
Lonely its mighty stem; high up appears

A leafy cupola, resembling quite  
 A temple on the obelisk's steep height.  
 Behold, it is the Palm ! The warm wind laves  
 The verdant fan-tops with its rocking waves.  
 The summit murmurs, from its lofty throne,  
 Like human voices, with harmonious tone :—  
 “ Be welcome, Stranger ! Speak, what is thy suit ?  
 Ask'st thou for bread ? behold, bread is my fruit ;  
 And if athirst, then drink my palm-tree wine,  
 I'll be thy corn-field, rivulet, and vine.  
 “ Art naked ? of my fibres weave a vest ;  
 If tired, repose beneath me as my guest ;  
 My shade will o'er thee a light covering spread :  
 I'll be at once thy fleecy herd and bed.  
 “ If thou wilt pray, a green dome then I raise ;  
 And if o'er land and ocean thou wilt gaze,  
 Look from my summit, if it shine or lower,  
 I'll be thy church, thy belfry, and watch-tower.  
 “ Behold yon sons of Nature, wild and free !  
 I am their realm, their dwelling, and their lea ;  
 Cradle and marriage-bed I deck with Palm,  
 As bell once murmur gently their death-psalm.  
 “ Shouldst thou, Diogenes-like, here drift astray,  
 Leap upon land, but push thy cask away,  
 That it float onward to some other sphere,  
 For thy cask even is superfluous here.”

4. William von Humboldt's 'Letters to a Female Friend,'—which have revealed to us, in a manner as surprising as touching, the store of profound German susceptibility which existed in this almost antique mind,—allude often to the living principle in, and the beneficent effects of, Nature. I quote one passage :—“ Indeed there is in trees an expression of longing beyond belief, when they stand so firmly planted, and with so circumscribed a sphere of action, while with their tops they move, as far as they are able, beyond the

boundary of their roots. I know nothing in Nature so formed to be a symbol of longing. In reality, it is the same with man, notwithstanding his apparent power of locomotion. Let him rove about as he may, he is, after all, chained to a span of earth. Sometimes he can never leave it—the same narrow spot beholds his cradle and his grave; or he goes away, but his inclination or necessities attract him always back again; or he remains entirely away, and his thoughts and wishes are still turned always towards his original dwelling-place.”

5. Thus an embassy of the Locrians appeared at Rome, ornamented with olive-branches (Livy, lib. xxix.); also the treacherous mountain tribes went to meet Hannibal, when he crossed the Alps, with garlands of olive on their heads (Polyb. lib. iii.); and the inhabitants of Thebes, too, appear with olive-boughs in their hands before the altars of Artemis, in order to avert from them the ravages of the plague. See also the grand scene at the beginning of Sophocles' *Cedipus*. Virgil names the olive *placida*, *pacifera*, etc., like the Grecian poets. Be it also observed here, that the Cistercian cloister Oliva, formerly existing near Danzig, took its name from the tree of peace: it was intended to be a place of peace and of belief to the warlike heathens.

6. Already in the primeval fable, which Abimelech relates to the Shechemites, the Olive says, “Should I leave my fatness, where-with by me they honour God and man?” (Judges ix. 9.)

7. See Virgil, *Ecl.* i. 25 :—

“Verum hæc tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes,  
Quantum læta solent inter viburna cupressi.”

8. The Cypress was given as attribute to Sylvanus :—

“Et teneram ab radice ferens, Sylvane, cupressum.”—*Virg.*

This leads one to suppose that at the time of the Romans it was met with more frequently, and was rather massed together in groves; although, on the other hand, the simile made use of in *Ecl.* i. points at isolation.

9. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xvi. 10 : “*Pinus picea feralis arbor et funebri indicio ad fores posita.*” The Pine was also consecrated to Cybele,

the great mother of life. Grieved at the loss of Atys, who was turned into a pine, she sat under the tree lamenting. On her requesting that her husband might be recalled to life, Jupiter granted that the tree should always remain green, untouched by the changes of bloom or of decay.

10. Is there any foundation for the assertion, that even Antiquity found this deceit in the pine? It throws (so runs the strange prosaic explanation) its heavy cones on the head of the wanderer resting in its shade, and kills him.

11. See Heine, 'Buch der Lieder':—

Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam  
Im Norden auf kahler Höh'.  
Ihn schläfert; mit weißer Decke  
Umhüllen ihn Eis und Schnee.

Er träumt von einer Palme,  
Die, fern im Morgenland,  
Einsam und schweigend trauert  
Auf brennender Felsenwand.

There stands a fir-tree northward,  
On a bare height all alone.  
He slumbers; a white cloak round him  
Of snow and of ice is thrown.

He of a palm is dreaming,  
In the East, far, far away,  
That lonely and silent mourneth  
On a rock in the sun's hot ray.

12. It is not at all far-fetched to perceive a hint of the peculiar tattling of the poplar in the German word *Pappel* (to babble), and the Latin *populus*. "What is said of the people—*mobilis turba*—may be applied to the tree of the same name; thus too, in the German words *Wolfe* (cloud) and *Wolf* (the people) there is a resemblance of sound, in which lies a certain characterizing significance." (*Krummacher*.)

13. (p. 31.) Lichtenberg quotes the poem here mentioned. The



English poet uttered the words when for the first time he tasted the intoxicating birch wine :—

O Birch! thou cruel, bloody tree,  
I'll be at last revenged of thee :  
Oft hast thou drunk the blood of mine,  
Now for an equal draught of thine.

13. (p. 36.) For those to whom the ballad of Goethe here alluded to is unknown, the following translation is subjoined.—TRANSL.

### THE ERL KING.

Who's riding so late through wind and wild ?  
It is the father, with his loved child ;  
The boy rests snugly upon his arm,  
He holds him safe, and he keeps him warm.  
“ My son, why hidest thou thy face in such fright ? ”  
“ Father, seest thou not the Erl King white,—  
The Erl King yonder, with crown and train ? ”  
“ My son, it is the mist and rain.”  
“ Thou darling child, come, go with me ;  
Such pretty games I will play with thee ;  
With flowers full many the shore is strow'd,  
My mother has many a golden robe.”  
“ O father, my father, and hearest not thou  
What Erl King softly did promise me now ? ”  
“ Be tranquil, be tranquil, my child, be still ;  
Through the dead leaves the wind whistles shrill.”  
“ My sweet boy, and wilt thou not come with me ?  
My daughter shall wait on thee prettily ;  
My daughter shall nightly thy vigil keep,  
And rock thee, and lull thee, and sing thee to sleep.”  
“ My father, my father, and sawest thou not  
The Erl King's daughter near yon dark spot ? ”  
“ My son, my son, I see well the gleam ;  
'Tis the old green willows beside the stream.”

"Come, pretty one, come! Go with me on my course,  
And art thou not willing, I'll take thee by force."

"O father, my father, he now grasps my arm;  
Erl King has done me a grievous harm."

The father shudder'd; he rideth on fast,  
He shelters his child in his arms from the blast.  
The roof gain'd at length toward which he sped,  
There lay the child in his arms quite dead!

14. (p. 32.) The Linden (*Lipa*) is now pronounced to be the tree emblematic of Slavonic nationality, and the *Lipa Slowanska* (Slavonian Linden) assumes the title in contradistinction to "German Oak." Leipsic (*Lipsk*) has, it is true, the Slavonic name for the Linden (*Lindenstadt*). But whoever is versed in old German poetry, knows that the Lime is a thoroughly German tree, and formerly played quite as important a part in poesy, as later the Oak,—especially since Klopstock's time, and which at an earlier period was seldom even named. That the Birch was symbolic of Slavonian sadness, is shown by the numerous names derived from *Breza*, the Birch:—Brietz, Brietzen, Preetz, Bretsch, Brizen, Treuenbriezen, etc.

14. (p. 37.) It was doubtless an oak with edible fruit,  $\delta\rho\upsilon\varsigma$  καρποφόρος; the god that conferred it on mortals,  $\text{Ζεὺς φηγός, φηγοναῖος}$ , Jupiter Fagutalis.

15. Baldur, the son of Odin and Frigga, the beneficent giver of light, the champion of the friendly gods in the struggle with the powers of darkness. "He will fall"—so it is declared in the prophetic utterance of the Nornen. Hereupon Frigga demands an oath from all that exists on the globe,—from the plants, the animals, and stones, from fire, water, and from the air,—that none of them injure Baldur. The anxious heart of the mother only forgot the misseltoe, sprouting as it does in concealment. Loki, the Evil One, discovers this, and maliciously persuades Baldur's own brother, the blind Hödr, to shoot at Baldur with a shaft of misseltoe. The prophecy is then fulfilled: Baldur falls.—Baldur is symbolical of the bright sunlight, that gradually dies away as the fair season passes.

Loki is darkness, and the fatal misseltoe is chosen by him because this plant outlives the Winter.

16. I allude chiefly to England on the one hand, and the Letts on the other. In a popular song of the last-named tribe, the Orphan boy, in his complaint, thus addresses the oak :—

“Wilt thou, O my beloved oak-tree,  
Not be changed into my father?  
Tell me, will all these green branches  
Not become white hands and fingers?  
—These green leaves  
Not be changed to words of love?”

17. See Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 290 :—

“*Æsculus imprimis, quæ quantum vertice ad auras  
Æthereas, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.  
Ergo non hyemes illam, non flabra, neque imbres  
Convellunt; immota manet, multosque per annos  
Multa virûm volvens durando sæcula vincit.  
Tum fortes latè ramos et brachia tendens  
Huc illuc, media ipsa ingentem sustinet umbram.*”

18. The description which Gilpin gives of the Beech, in his ‘Forest Scenery,’ may be almost termed morose. “Its skeleton,” he says, “is very deficient;” and of its ramifications, “The branches are fantastically wreathed and disproportioned, twining awkwardly among each other.” But he especially finds fault with the luxuriant, bushy foliage: “This bushiness gives a great heaviness to the tree: what lightness it has, disgusts.” In this tone he continues, with a single exception, to the end: “On the whole however, the massy, full-grown, luxuriant beech is rather a displeasing tree.”

19. In Germany there is no dearth of remarkable old and beautiful Lime-trees. One of the finest I know stands in the churchyard of the suburbs of Annaberg. The old legend of the Resurrection is connected with it, as is also the case with other Limes, and the remembrance of which is kept alive by a sermon preached annually under the wide-spreading branches of the tree.

The largest and oldest German Lime is probably that at Neustadt, on the Kocher. In 1229 it was already a magnificent tree; for, according to the old chronicle, the new town (*neue Stadt*) was built up again beside the high-road, "*near the great tree,*" after the destruction of the old town (Helmbundt) in 1226. In the year 1408 it was said:—

Vor dem Thor eine Linde stah,   
 Die sieben und sechzig Säulen hat.

At the city gate stands a Linden-tree   
 With sixty-seven columns, as you may see.

The quadruple portico, with a hundred and fifteen stone pillars, erected later, Duke Christian had built in 1558. This tree is now thirty-two feet in circumference, and the space covered by its branches is an extent of four hundred feet. A not less remarkable tree is the so-called "Vemlinde," at Dortmund.

20. Die ahornböm hett man hievor gor wert, daz man sie zohe in der künig höf unde win zu in goß. (In former times the maple-tree was accounted highly of; it was drawn into the courtyard of the King, and wine poured on it.)

21. Prayer while cutting down the maple:—"Goody Maple, give me some wood of thine, and I will give thee of mine, when it grows in the wood."

22. See Froshmäusler:—

Ich bin von den Alten gelart,   
 Der Eschenbaum hab diese art,   
 Das keine Schlang vnter ihn bleib,   
 Der Schatten sie auch hinweg treib,   
 Ja die Schlang ehe ins Feuer hinleufft,   
 Ehe sie durch seinen Schatten schleiff.

(Old men have told me that the Ash hath this property,—that no snake will remain beneath it; that the shadow of the tree even is enough to drive it away; that the snake will rather go into the fire, than creep into its shade.)

23. It is characteristic that only the three more perfect classes of



animals have a language; for as to the insects, they are merely instrumental musicians. I beg leave to remark here, what I have somewhere read, that the amphibious animals, the snake excepted, produce their tones more with the help of the palate. With mammalia, the sound is uttered by means of the lips, much in the same way as with children when they begin to lisp. But with birds it is principally caused by the tongue: hence they sing and whistle; their language is a tongue language, and among the most perfect of those of animals.

24. Among those who were acquainted with it, may be reckoned Tiresias, to whom Minerva accorded the gift of tongues and of prophecy, as compensation for his loss of sight: also Helenus the Trojan, Thales, and Melampus. Apollonius of Tyana also boasted of being acquainted with the science. But above all, King Solomon is said to have been versed in the language of birds. The Bible records of him, that he knew every animal and every plant, from the hyssop to the cedar; and indeed in the East he was considered as the very ideal of wisdom. In the Middle Ages, it is related of Gerbert that he learnt at Seville to interpret the flight and songs of birds; Benedict IX. also understood the voices of birds, and knew how to augur from them what had happened today or yesterday, of would happen tomorrow in every part of the world. King Dag, the Yngling, was also master of these languages, and he had a sparrow that often brought him intelligence and went forth into different lands. (See *Snorra Ynglinga*.) A handmaid, gifted with like knowledge, is to be met with in *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. lxxviii. There were moreover various means of learning the language of birds. One is attributed to Democritus of Abdera, and is given in Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 49; in the Dutch poem 'Caerl en de Elegast,' a herb is spoken of, by which the language of birds may be understood. Elsewhere this knowledge is said to depend on eating a white snake or the heart of a dragon or bird (*Grimm, Mythol.*); Apollodorus of Melampus relates that he had acquired the gift by licking the ears of a serpent. The language of birds may also be learned by diligent study. In fairy tales, there is some one who studies for three years the barking of dogs, the songs of birds, and what the

frogs say when they croak. In later times many persons have attempted to attain honour in this department of philology :—

*a.* A law student of Breslau, John Benjamin Grosser by name, towards the middle of the last century : he studied the goose language in the country, and had the intention to write a Goose lexicon.

*b.* Charles Wizniewsky, who took his degree at Wilna in 1837. In his inaugural dissertation (*‘Descriptio Raphaniæ epidemice grasantis atque meletemata circa vocem et gustus animalium domesticorum’*), a few examples of the language of animals are given, and their meaning ; among others, a conversation of cocks and hens ; but the author premises to enter later more deeply into the subject.

*c.* Dupont de Nemours asserted that he understood eleven words of the pigeon language, the same number of that of fowls, fourteen of the cat tongue, twenty-two of the language of cattle, thirty of that of dogs, and that the raven tongue he understood completely. He also set to music the songs of different birds, and pretended that he had discovered the signification of their words.

*d.* The Englishman Thomas Gardiner has followed the steps of Dupont, in a work entitled *‘The Music of Nature.’*

*e.* The newest work of this sort is from the pen of Pierquin de Gembloux, and bears the title *‘Idiomologie des Animaux, ou Recherches Historiques, Philosophiques, et Glossologiques sur le Langage des Bêtes.’* [Mr. Jesse, in his *‘Country Life,’* says he believes “there is a dialect in the songs of birds. The song, for example, of a thrush near London, or in any of the home counties, has little resemblance, except in tone and specific character, to that of the same bird in Devonshire or near Exeter. The same notes, I suppose, will all of them be detected, but they are arranged, for the most part, in a different tune, and are not sung in the same way. They are given with different values, and the singing is pitched in a different key. One great distinction between the two cases is the the number of guttural notes, of which the song of a Devonshire thrush is often made up, but which near London are heard only at the end of a bar, or even much less frequently ; while those chief notes, which mainly constitute the song of the other bird, and make

it so impressive, are rarely pronounced by the Devonshire thrush." —TRANSL.]

25. The *præsagium*, which the Romans attributed to fowls, was not of a very intellectual order. It depended solely on the quick or slow eating of the birds; the former being a good, the latter an unfavourable omen. This reminds us of Claudius Pulcher, who threw the obstinate fowls that would not eat, full of wrath, into the sea, that they might drink (*quia esse nolunt, bibant!*). Every legion had its *Pullarius*, who took care of the fowls: the Consul had the augury performed in his own house or tent before any important act was undertaken, so that Pliny might very justly affirm, "*Pullis regitur imperium Romanum.*"

26. At Clonmel, in a mill, whose winged population consisted of a single goose and a hen, a number of ducks' eggs were laid under the latter, which in due time were hatched. As soon as the ducklings made their appearance, instinct drove them to the water, which caused the hen great tribulation. Maternal affection impelled her to follow her young, while a feeling of self-preservation kept her upon land. Suddenly her friend the goose came sailing by, and after a noisy cackling, which, literally translated, meant "Only leave them to me!" swam up and down with the ducklings. When they were tired of their swim, the goose brought them back again to the hen. The next morning the young ducks repaired again to the pond. The goose took charge of them, and the hen put herself once more into a great flurry. Without asserting that the goose, being moved by the sight of her maternal anguish, gave her an invitation, so much, at least, is certain, that she swam close to the shore, that the hen jumped on her back, and, thus quietly seated, accompanied her ducklings on their excursions in the water. This did not happen once only; day after day the hen went on board the goose, and, contented and pleased, followed her young charges. A number of persons congregated to witness the strange sight, until the ducks no longer needed the united protection of goose and hen. This is related and vouched for by Caesar Otway, in his work, '*The Intellectuality of Domestic Animals.*'

27. Of panegyrics and poems in praise of the Cock, of the *Renaiss-*



sance period, may be named—Ulyssis Aldrovandi Galli Gallinacei Encomium; Joach. Camerarii Galli Encomium; and further, Oratio funebris in Gallum, in prose and verse; also the following poems—Ioann. Passeratii Gallus, and Tobiaë Sculteti Gallus Gallinaceus. I know none of these writings, nor Gockelius, ‘Vom Haus oder Gockelhahn,’ 1697; without mentioning other later apotheoses.

28. I have committed forgery with these verses. The first is from a poem by Anastasius Grün, ‘The Two Hens;’ to which I have added the second, the spuriousness of which is, it is true, easily detected. More homely is the description in the nursery riddle:—

It is een Mann ut Hütendücken,  
 Het en Rock ut tusend Flicken,  
 Het en knöfern Augesicht,  
 Het en Ramm un kämmt fîf nich.

(It is a man from Hütendücken; he has a coat of a thousand patches; he has a horny face; he has a comb, and does not comb himself.) Simrock, in his Nursery Rhymes, puts “Ægypten” at the end of the first line, while “Hütendücken” seems to be onomatopœiacal. [Instead of an extract from an old German poem, given in the original, I quote here Dryden’s description of the Cock.—  
 TRANSL.

“ High was his comb and coral-red withal,  
 In dents embattled like a castle wall;  
 His bill was raven black, and shone like jet;  
 Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet;  
 White were his nails, like silver to behold,  
 His body glittering like the burnish’d gold.”]

29. The Greeks practised a peculiar ἀλεκτρομαντεία, laying grains of corn on the letters of the alphabet, which a cock was allowed to peck away. (Grimm, Mythol. i.) Pliny mentions the “Tripudia solistima” of the Romans:—“Hi magistratus nostros quotidie regunt, domosque ipsis suas aut claudunt aut reserant: hi fascēs Romanos impellunt aut retinent, jubent acies aut prohibent, victoriarum omnium toto orbe partarum auspices: hi maxime terrarum imperio



imperant, extis etiam fibrisque haud aliter quam opimæ victoriæ diis grati," etc. etc.

30. The Koran describes the aboriginal Cock of Heaven in a very fantastic manner. He is white; his wings, strewed over with emeralds and carbuncles, extend from the rising to the setting of the sun; from his comb to his spur is a journey of five hundred years. Daily at morn he raises his voice, which penetrates all space: every creature hears it, save the deaf race of men, and songs of praise sound in answer from all the cocks on earth. When the end of days is come, Allah speaks to him thus:—"Fold thy wings, and let thy voice be silenced, that all creatures may know the Day of Judgement is come; from man alone let it be hidden."

31. Oppian calls him the most pugnacious bird; and Pliny commences his animated description with the words, "*Proxime gloriam sentiunt hi nostri vigiles*," etc.; while, on the other hand, an old chronicler ends his account of the victory of the Antwerp citizens over the treacherous Duke of Brabant, with the following reflection:—"Ye thus see that a burgher who hath grown up in freedom and to the use of arms, and having the same at hand, will always be of good cheer, stout-hearted and valiant, and that nothing battles so madly as a cock on his own dunghill."

32. Pliny gives the following lively description:—"Dimicatione paritur regnum inter ipsos, velut ideo tela agnata cruribus suis intelligentes: nec finis sæpe commorientibus. Quodsi palma contigit, statim in victoria canunt, seque ipsi principes testantur. Victus occultatur silens, ægreque servitium patitur." A shorter, not less lively representation is to be found in Babrius, Fab. 4.

33. See Ælian, Var. Hist. ii. 28. In a naval engagement of the year 1793, it was the cock on board the admiral's (Berkeley's) vessel which recalled victory to the side of the English. It was on board the 'Marlborough;' and just as the English were about to retreat, in the middle of the raging fight, the cock flew upon the splintered mast of the Admiral's ship, flapped his wings boldly, and let his clanging voice be heard. Like a kindling spark it flew into the hearts of the sailors; their old, calm valour woke again, and the victory was won.

34. In Reinardus, iii. 936-38, the Cock says :—

“ Conjugibus bis sex impero solus ego :  
Quælibet et minimum non audet tangere granum,  
Me nisi mandetur præcipiente prius.”

And in an old popular rhyme it is said :—

Wenn die Henne frähet vor dem Hahn  
Und das Weib redet vor dem Mann :  
So soll man die Henne braten  
Und das Weib mit Brügel'n berathen.

(When the hen crows before the cock, and the wife speaks before her husband has done so, the hen should be eaten, and the woman beaten.) [I remember to have heard, in Devonshire, when a boy, the following saying :—“ A crowing hen, a dancing priest, and a woman that talked Latin, never yet came to a good end.”—TRANSL.]

35. Reinmar von Zweter :—“ Der han, daz iuwer frûmekeit iuch ner dâst iuwer heil, wan ir meistert hennen.” Hugo, in Renner :—

“ Er het dâ bî vil grôzen braht  
Mit zwelf hennen tac und naht.”  
And hath therewith noise infinite,  
With twelve hens both by day and night.

36. The ancients vie with each other in their descriptions of the Peacock. Instead of any other, I give here the eloquent words of Tertullian (*De Pallio*, cap. iii.) :—“ Quanquam et pavo pluma vestis et quidem de cataclitis : immo omni conchylio pressior, qua colla florent : et omni patagio inauratior, qua terga fulgent : et omni symmate solutior, qua caudæ jacent : multicolor et discolor et versicolor : numquam ipsa, semper alia : etsi semper ipsa, quando alia : toties denique mutanda, quoties movenda.”

37. It is quite like the vain Hortensius, that he should have been the first to chance on such a fancy (see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 23 ; Varro, *de Re Rust.* iii. 6). Ælian however adds that this honour cost him dear (*καταθύσας ἐπὶ δαίπνῳ τῶν πρῶτος, κατεκρίθη*). Be it remarked, that Marcus Aufidius Lurco discovered the art of fattening peacocks, by which, in a short time, he earned 60,000 sesterces.

[I add the following passage, relating to the Peacock, taken from Drake's 'Shakspeare and his Times : '—"Manchet loaves, wassail-bread, and the stately pie,—that is, a peacock or pheasant pie,—were still common in the days of Shakspeare. During the prevalence of chivalry, it was still usual for the knights to take their vows of enterprise at a solemn feast, on the presentation to each knight, in turn, of a roasted peacock in a golden dish. For this was afterwards substituted,—though only in a culinary light, and as the most magnificent dish which could be brought to table,—a peacock in a pie, preserving as much as possible the form of the bird, with the head elevated above the crust, the beak richly gilt, and the beautiful tail spread out to its full extent. In allusion to these superb dishes, a ludicrous oath was prevalent in Shakspeare's time, which he has with much propriety put into the mouth of Justice Shallow, who, soliciting the stay of the fat knight, exclaims, 'By cock and pie, Sir, you shall not go away tonight.'"—TRANSL.]

38. Ovid, *Ars Am. lib. i.* :—

“Laudatas ostendit avis Junonia pennas,  
Si tacitus spectes, illa recondit opes.”

Also Pliny, *Hist. Nat. x. 22* ; Ælian, *Hist. An. v. 25* ; and numerous passages in Bochart, *Hieroz. ii. p. 240*.

39. The contrast between the Peacock and the Crane was mentioned already by Babrius (*Fab. 65*) ; also by Boner (*Fab. 81*). In the fable the peacock plays a secondary part. He appears in the old German poem 'Froschmäusler,' and it is said :—The birds wanted a king, and their choice fell on the peacock, because of his wondrous beauty, and because he already wore a crown upon his head. But Markolf, the Jay, perceiving meanwhile that the peacock loved only pomp and courtly devices, and would, as their ruler, levy contributions from the poor, that he might deck himself with costly garments, pearls, and precious stones ; the birds repented of their choice, and they made the Eagle their king.

40: *Χήν*, *Anser*, *Gans*, are immediately connected with each other, although, according to Pliny, *Hist. Nat. x. 27* ("candidi ibi—in Germania—*gantæ* vocantur"), it would seem as if at least the

Roman natural historian took the word *Gans* for a German primitive word. In 'Pœnitentiarius' the goose is called *auca* (a form of the *lingua rustica*), from which was derived *oca*, and finally the French *oie*.

41. The nursery songs often allude to the goose's feet, and particularly dwell on the circumstance, not without a certain compassion, that the geese are obliged to go barefoot. For example, the well-known lullaby,—

Suse, lewe Suse, wat ruffelt int Stroh?  
 Dat sin de lewe Gōskens, de hebben kene Schoh:  
 Schofter het ledder, keen lesten darto,  
 Drum gahn se barfot un hebben kene Schoh.

What makes such a rustling? what makes this ado?  
 'Tis the poor little goslings, that have not got a shoe;  
 The cobbler has leather, but no last he can use,  
 And so they go barefoot, and never have shoes.

The dwarfs too have goose-feet, on which account they hide them carefully from view, and are very angry when their secret is discovered.

42. Ἀναβῶα, κλάγγει, κακκάκει, *gingrit*, *strepit*, *gratitat*, are the expressions of the ancients. That is to say, *κακκάκειν* and *gratitare* are used, and, as it would seem, to designate the usual cackle; while the other Latin words rather express that snake-like hiss by which the goose vents her anger.

43. Veget. de Re Milit. iv. 26. Colum. de Re Rust. cap. 13. Ovid, when he describes Philemon's idyllic cottage: "Unicus anser erat minimæ custodia villæ." In Lucretius (de Rer. Nat. iv. 686): "Humanum longe præsentit odorem Romulidarum arcis servator, candidus anser."

44. The name "Martinmas Goose" is in truth extremely old. Already as early as 1171, in the Annal. Corbei. mention is made of the 'anserēs Martiniani;' and also, on the old Runic Calendars, and those consisting of a piece of notched wood, St. Martinmas Day is marked by a goose. (Olaus Worm. Fast. Danic. ii. c. 8, p. 127.) What the geese have to do with the Saint, is a point on



which the history of the Saint gives no information. Later songs inform us that Martin, when sought after to make him Bishop, crept among the geese to hide himself, and was betrayed by their cackling. This however, as Simrock says, seems a modern addition to the legend, for the sake of explaining the existing custom.

45. "Sß gens Martini, wurst in festo Nicolai,  
Sß Blasii semper, haring oculi mei semper," etc.
46. "In illo tempore sedebat dominus Martinus, o ho!  
Bonus ille Martinus inter anseres im Stroß,  
Und sie waren alle froh;  
Ja froh waren sie alle,  
Und schnatterten mit Schalle.  
O lieber Pater Better Bruder Märten,  
Was hast du vor Gefährten  
In stramine nostro?  
Sie müssen dein entgelten,  
Magst fluchen oder schelten.  
Drum fangen wir an  
Wohl auf den Plan;  
Drum sind wir da  
Und halten Martinalia!" etc.

Among the people such Martinmas convivia, or carols, are still in vogue.

47. The gander spoken of in the 'Yorkshire Gazette' of 1834 offers a parallel story. An old gentleman here—so runs the paragraph—is an object of universal interest, on account of the strange companion that constantly attends him. This companion is a gander belonging to a farmer. The bird comes every morning at five o'clock from his farm-yard to the house of the old gentleman, and awakes him by his cries. He then accompanies him the whole day in his walks, and may be seen walking behind him through the most frequented streets, unmindful of the screams of the children, by whom the pair are often followed. If the old gentleman sits down to rest, which often happens, the gander lays himself at his feet. There are many places where the old man is especially accustomed to halt. On

approaching one of these, his feathered companion runs on before, turns round, and signifies by cackling and flapping his wings that the resting-place is reached. When any one annoys the old gentleman, the gander expresses his displeasure by his cries, and sometimes by biting. When he goes into an inn, the bird follows him if allowed to do so, and remains behind him till he has drunk his glass of ale. If not permitted to enter, he awaits his master at the door.

48. This is an old custom. In 'Wolfram,' the Squire of the Gralburg chides the pious simplicity of Parcival,\* who goes past the holy spot in silence and ignorant of its neighbourhood, by saying to him, "Ir sit ein gans." The saying is well known :—

Es flog ein Gans wohl vbern Rhein,  
Sie kam ein Gans auch wieder heim.

Across the Rhine a goose once flew,  
And as a goose it came back too.

But—

Man sieht mangeln vor albern an,  
Weiß nicht, was er inwendig kan.

There's many a one we deem a sot,  
But what's within him, we know not.

Thus it is written in a poem in praise of the goose, towards the middle of the sixteenth century. The beginning is as follows :—

Ich bin ein Gans, seht mich recht an,  
Mein Tugend weyß nit Jederman.  
Wer mich veracht und kendet mich nicht,  
Der nem aus diesem Buch bericht.

A goose am I, look at me well,  
Not each one can my virtues tell ;  
Who knows me not, and scorns my wit,  
Then let him read what here is writ.

In 'Eselkönig' the goose appears even as ruler over the bird kingdom ; there is also a particular poem of 'King Goose' (Gansfönig),

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\* *Gral* is the dish on which Christ, at His last supper, placed the bread which He had broken.

Strasburg, 1607. In 'Reineke' the goose is only casually mentioned, and is called "Alheit" (Adelaide), whilst in 'Isengrimus' and 'Reinardus Vulpes' the gander is named Gerhardus (Gerard). Finally, be it observed, that the wolf and the fox figure in the German fable as preachers to the geese.

49. The Roman myth transformed Phaeton into a swan, and placed him among the stars. The German traditions of the swan are the richest of any. Above all, the swan-maidens are the most important, by which in reality the Valkyrs are meant. But sorceresses may also change themselves into such birds by means of certain charms. Local traditions are those of Valenciennes (*i. e. Vallis cygnea*); also of Cleves and Brabant, in which an enchanted Swan-Knight marries the Duchess, and becomes the ancestor of the ducal house of Lorraine. Conrad of Würzburg has devoted a particular poem to this tradition, called 'Der Schwanen-Ritter.' In Flemish, and even in Northern popular tales, the story of the Knight in the Swan Ship is to be found.

50. "White as a swan," an expression common also among the ancients (κύκνου πολιότερος). "Galatea candidior cygnis."—*Ovid*. Hence, doubtless, his olden name, still often heard in Lower Germany, of "Elbiz," the *light-giving* (albus), unless perchance it refers us to *elf* and *elves*.

51. See *Ovid*. *Amor.* ii. *Eleg.* 6: "Illic innocui late pascuntur olores." The opinion of Pöppig, as I now perceive, does not coincide with the description of Buffon, which is certainly more poetical than scientific. Pöppig calls the swan malicious and tyrannical, and only when tamed does he allow that these qualities are somewhat moderated. And this opinion is in harmony with an expression of Aristotle, according to which swans will often attack each other in a fit of bloodthirstiness: Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ κύκνοι ἀλληλόφαγοι μάλιστα τῶν ὀρνέων. The same is related by Pliny and Ælian.

52. In the text I have made no mention of the difference between the *Cygnus olor* and *Cygnus musicus*, there being scarcely any but an anatomical one. To avoid mistakes, I beg to remark that the sonorous call is peculiar to the latter bird alone. The more artificial mechanism of the windpipe explains this. The first-named bird

produces, on the contrary, a tone that is sometimes described as harshly clanging, sometimes as being like the braying of an ass, and again as like a low murmur. Ovid says of these swans, "*Inque glomis cygni prope flumina drensant*;" while Aristophanes seems to allude to the other sort, when in 'The Birds' he expresses the cry of the swans by *Tío, Tío, Tío, Tíγξ*.

53. Even Pythagoras already gave this interpretation; also Plato in 'Phædon,' which Cicero perhaps had in mind when he says (Tuscul. i. 73):—"Cygni non sine causa Apolloni dicati sunt, sed quod ab eo divinationem habere videantur, qua providentes, quid in morte boni sit, cum cantu et voluptate moriantur."

54. *Nḡtta* (according to Varro, ἀπὸ τοῦ νέειν, as *anas a natando*?), *anas*; in Low Latin, *aneta*; Old High German, *ánet*; Low German, *ánt*; French, *canette*.

55. The duck often makes her appearance in nursery rhymes. There are also many proverbs about the duck; for example:—*He füt em so glif, als de Rēh dem Nutvogel*. (He is as like him as a cow is like a drake.) *De Nuten dragen eer Recht up den Buefel*: by which is meant, that when ducks do mischief they may be beaten; hence the expression, *Guem en Nutrugge slan*, to beat black and blue. Also "to preach about blue ducks," being synonymous with lying. [The French also term a hoax, *un canard*; and in Germany the same word, *Ente*, is used to express the same thing.—TRANSL.]

56. He says the animal, by the action of his lungs, draws the fluid or half-fluid matter in which he has thrust his bill through the small spaces between the teeth, and thus catches and retains all that is fit for food, while the rest passes easily away. Now, if he allow that it was the intention to separate the useful particles of a quantity of substances all mixed up together, or rather to give the faculty of doing so, no more convenient instrument could have been furnished him than this natural sieve. It is known, besides, that the bills of this species are provided with large nerves, extending to the furthest extremity, which aid the animal greatly in choosing and distinguishing his food.

57. Psalm lxviii. 13: the splendour of armed squadrons is compared to the "wings of a dove, covered with silver and her feathers



with yellow gold." Lucretius, ii. 800, eloquently describes the metallic lustre of the dove's plumage:—

"Pluma columbarum quo pacto in sole videtur,  
Quæ sita cervices circum collumque coronat:  
Namque alias fit uti rubro sit clara pyropo,  
Interdum quodam sensu fit, uti videatur  
Inter cæruleum virides miscere smaragdos."

58. Simple and void of melody as the voice of the pigeon is, it still goes to the heart. There lies in the gloomy, long drawn-out tone, something tender, wistful, and complaining. Chrysostom says very beautifully: "The lonely dove, when calling to her mate in the wood, moves the valleys with sweetly soothing lament (*γοεραῖς κολακείας*)."

A very usual epithet applied to the dove by the Greek poets is *βαρύφθογγος*; her cry is called a sigh (*στόνειν*, *γογγύζειν*, *λαρύννειν*; but also *κακκαβίζειν*, Lat. *gemere*, *murmurare*: "Nec gemere aceria cessabit turtur ab ulmo." (Virg. Ecl. i. 59.) The Hebrews also took the same view: the sick Hezekiah is said to "sigh like a dove;" the banished Jews "mourn like doves."

In popular rhymes also, the notes of the dove are spoken of as a lamentation. Of the wood-pigeon, which also is sometimes called cow-pigeon, the following story is related:—In former times the pigeon had a cow, from which it got butter, milk, and cheese in plenty; and therefore the pigeon took great care of the cow, and sought out the best pastures for her, never leaving her for a moment. But once seeing the magpie flying by with branches and twigs in his bill, the pigeon asked what he was going to do with all that wood; to which the magpie replied, "I am building a nest on yonder oak-tree: it is nearly finished; if you like, come with me and look at it." So the pigeon flew off with the magpie, and was greatly surprised at the thorny house; for it was firm and strong, and had moreover a roof, so that the rain could not penetrate. The pigeon said to the magpie, "What must I give you, to be taught how to build such a cleverly contrived nest?" "Give me your cow," said the magpie, "and I will show you." The pigeon agreed to the bargain, and then the magpie explained the art, fetched twigs,

and laid them out crosswise on a forked branch. But the pigeon grew impatient with joy, and fancied there was no need of seeing the rest. "That will do," she said; "I know now how it is to be done." The magpie was glad to have obtained the cow at so cheap a rate, and cried, "Ha, ha, ha! the cow is mine!" and flew away with the cow. But the pigeon, when she wanted to build further, had forgotten how, and was unable to finish her nest; and in spite of all her thinking and trying, she could never remember the way: and this is the reason the pigeon, to this very hour, builds her nest so carelessly. She grieved much for her cow, and sits lonesome in the wood, crying always, "Oh, my cow! oh, my cow! if I had but my cow!" [The German word for cow (*Kuh*) is pronounced *coo*. —TRANSL.]

In the Life and Death of Cock Robin, the dove appears as chief mourner:—

"Who will be chief mourner?

'I,' said the Dove,

'For I mourn for my love,

And I will be chief mourner.'

59. Thus Gregory of Nazianzus, in Cantic. cap. iii. In a sermon of the twelfth century it is said: "Si lit gerne bi dem wazzer, daz si den schaten gesehen mege, swenne si der habech vaken wil."

60. Virgil, *Æn.* v. 213, compares the swift ship of Mnestheus to a pigeon. In the Psalms (lv. 6) the Singer, surrounded by his enemies, wishes for the wings of a dove, that he may flee away and be at rest. And in Sophocles (*Œdip.* Col. 1081) the chorus exclaims:—

Εἰθ' ἀελλαία ταχύρροστος πελειὰς

Αἰθερίας νεφέλας

Κύρσαιμ' . . .

61. I take the lowest estimate. The swiftest flight of a carrier pigeon, as many experiments have proved, is sixty English miles an hour. The late Bishop of Norwich relates, that fifty-six pigeons were brought over to England from a district in Holland, where especial attention was paid to their breeding, and at half-past four in the morning were let fly from London: at noon they were all in their

dovecotes again; indeed one, a favourite cock pigeon, named Napoleon, came back by a quarter-past ten. He had, therefore, performed the distance of more than three hundred miles at the rate of more than fifty miles an hour, supposing him not to have lost a moment, and to have flown in a straight line.

62. According to popular belief, the stork always arrives among us on one and the same day—on the 17th of March: hence the distich—

Sankt Gertraud heisset uns willkommen,  
Mit Sankt Jakob ziehen wir davon.

We come here on St. Gertrude's Day,  
And with St. James we speed away.

In Southern Germany and Switzerland, where the stork appears earlier, the 22nd of February is considered the day of his arrival.

63. Among the Greeks, whoever first announced the return of the stork, was paid for the tidings. In many towns of Germany the watchmen of the towers, during the last century, were ordered to announce the coming of Spring's harbinger by sound of trumpet, for which service a draught of wine, out of the civic cellars, was accorded him. Different rhymes too were used at the departure of the bird.

64. They pay much attention to his first appearance, and assert—

a. Whoever sees the first stork flying in Spring will have health and good luck; he who sees him sitting may expect the contrary.

b. If the first stork that is seen is dirty in plumage, then the Summer will be wet and dirty.

c. Whoever hears the first stork clapping with his bill without having seen him, will break much earthenware.

65. "*Gloterat immenso . . . ciconia rostro*" (Auct. Phil. v. 92). "*Crepitante ciconia rostro*" (Ovid, Met. vi.). Οἱ πελαργοὶ παρίοντας ἡμᾶς κροτῶσιν" (Philostrat.). "*Ciconia . . . gracilipes, crotalistris*" (Pub. Syr.). As to this strange wooden sound, it is peculiar to the stork, and occasioned in early times the belief that the bird had no tongue (Pliny, Hist. Nat. x. 31). "Der stork ist ana zunge" (Tragemundeslied). The stork too is introduced ironically as

musician in all humorous popular rhymes of the weddings of animals and their funerals. See Charles Boner's book, p. 5, 'The Merry Wedding:' this song is of Wendish origin.

66. Hereupon Aldrovandi grows warm:—"Ubi jam nido appulere—dii boni quam dulcissima salutatio! quanta ob felicem adventum gratulatio! qui complexus! quam mellita cernas oscula! atque interius avis susurri quidam audiuntur."

67. Πελαργός, according to Suidas, from πέλας = μέλας, and ἀργός = λευκός. The Latin word *ciconia* refers, according to Isidore (Etym.), to the clapping noise of the stork:—"Ciconiæ quasi ciconiæ, a sono quo crepitant dictæ sunt." In like manner, perhaps the name of the stork among the Wends (*Heinotter*) is to be explained. In the Arabic *laklaka* the connection cannot well be doubted.

68. See Babrius:—

Πελαργός εἰμι, εὖσεβέστατον ζῶον,  
Ὅστις μητέρι καὶ πατέρι δουλούω.

69. Aristophanes, *Birds*, 1352:—

Ἄλλ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν νόμος  
Παλαιὸς ἐν τοῖς τῶν πελαργῶν κύρβεσιν·  
Ἐπὴν ὁ πατὴρ ὁ πελαργὸς ἐκπετησίμους  
Πάντας ποιήσῃ τοὺς πελαργιδεῖς τρέφων,  
Δεῖ τοὺς νεοττοὺς τὸν πατέρα πάλιν τρέφειν.

70. The Stork has, according to Grimm, a poetical and a prosaic name. His poetical appellation given above (Old High German, *odebero*) must be traced back to heathen times. *Bar*, or *bero*, means "bearer;" the obscure *ode* may either be derived from *ot* (i.e. *opes*, good fortune) or from an unknown *ód* (Anglo-Saxon *eád*, i. e. *proles*). (In the old Saxon word *Héljand* may be found, it is true, *ódan*; Anglo-Saxon, *eáden*, i. e. *genitus*.) In the first case, *Adebar* would mean "Luck-bringer," "Bringer of good;" and the name still prevalent in many districts, *Heilebar*, *Heilebard*, seems to favour the supposition. In 'Eselkönig' he is called quite plainly *Heylbot* (messenger of good). The second derivation is in accordance with the universal child-like belief that the stork is the



bringer of the new-born children. Yet both derivations may perhaps, as Alt shows, be traced back to one and the same thought. Adebar is the messenger of Spring: as such he announces the renewed fruitfulness of Nature, which, on the one hand, brings prosperity and happiness, while on the other it is a fitting symbol for the blessing of children. The prosaic name of the bird, as old probably as the poetical one, is *Storch*; Old High German, *storah*; Anglo-Saxon, *storc*; Old North German, *storkr*.

In a Swedish tradition, the stork is brought into connection with the passion of Christ. As the Saviour hung on the cross, the stork came among other birds, saw His sufferings, and cried out sympathizingly, *Stärke, stärke, stärke ihu!* (Strengthen, strengthen, strengthen Him!), and hence he received the name of Stork.

In the *Acerra Philol.* the name is brought into connection with the Greek *στοργή* (Stork—the Suffering, on account of the affection and constancy which storks show each other). Arndt also is of this opinion; which however befits the poet better than the grammarian. In 'Reineke Fuchs' the stork is called Barthold, and in 'Froschmäusler,' Barthold Leisetritt.

71. Besides the above-mentioned passages, see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 32: "Genetricum senectam invicem educant." Ælian, *Hist. An.* iii. 23: *Τρέφειν τοὺς πατέρας παλαργοὶ γεγηρακότας καὶ ἐθέλουσι καὶ ἐμελέτησαν.*

72. In the Altmark the girls sing:—

Odebeer, Langebeer,  
Bring mi 'n lütjen Broder her!

The boys:—

Heinotter, Heinotter, du Lister, (? Myster)  
Bring mi 'ne lütje Syfter!

73. Though the circumstance has been often doubted, it is still undeniable. It has been attested by the most trustworthy persons; and in the course of last Summer, I was, with several friends, witness of a stork council, which unfortunately was interrupted. There were perhaps between forty and fifty storks—a sort of Rump Parliament—who ranged themselves in large circles on two different

sides. They made several attempts at acting their parts, but a dog that surprised them put so many interpellations to the assembly in such a persevering and rude manner, that they at last dissolved the meeting. For more ancient attestations of the fact, see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* x. 31; Ælian, *Hist. An.* iii. 23; Melancthon, *Oratt.* tom. v. p. 490; also Aldrovandi, Gessner, and others.

74. I have already alluded to the songs on the departure of the stork:—

“ When the rye is ripe  
And when the frog is mute,” etc.

This is the case on the Feast of St. James (July 25), when the frogs cease croaking; according to an old proverb, which says, “If the hole beneath the nose were closed like a frog after St. James’s day, much evil would then not come to pass.”

In this neighbourhood (the North of Germany) the stork does not go away on the 25th of July: it even seldom happens by the Festival of St. Lawrence (August 10), and more generally occurs toward the Feast of St. Bartholomew (August 24). I observe here, as a remarkable circumstance, that on the 18th of October, 1851, I saw two quite strong, healthy storks seeking their food on a meadow near Salzwedel.

75. The traveller Shaw, when on Mount Carmel, saw troops of migrating storks extending half an English mile in breadth, and which were several hours in passing. Pliny says, the arrivals and departures of the storks take place at night:—“*Nemo vidit agmen discedentium, cum discessurum appareat: nec venire, sed venisse cernimus: utrumque nocturnis fit temporibus.*” With regard to their departure, the same thing is also asserted elsewhere.

Some troops of storks remain behind in the South of Europe. Constantinople, for example, is one of their winter stations; also Seville, where almost every tower is inhabited by them. Others go towards Asia Minor: Niebuhr saw hundreds of them in Bagdad on the walls of the town, and in the ruins of Persepolis they have taken up their quarters as peaceful inhabitants: not a column, not a capital, which does not support a nest. The coast of Africa is always however their principal rendezvous, and they are es-

pecially numerous in Algiers. In Bona and Constantine they build their nests on every mosque; at Maskara, the palaces of Abd-el-Kader and of his Beys are covered with stork nests. The ruin of the citadel of Mostagenem is exclusively peopled by them; hence the name "The Storks' Castle" (Bordschial Mehab). The Arabs believe that the stork was formerly a Marabout, whom Allah transformed on account of some great sin. They are strengthened in this faith, by the circumstance, that storks prefer building on mosques, where they often, standing on one leg beside the Crescent, and sunk in contemplation, look like stylites. If they wake from their reverie, and, throwing back their head, look up toward heaven with a clapping noise, the Arabs then say, "The Marabout is praying." See Rennie, Bird Architecture.

76. Ovid, Fast. ii. : "Veris prænuncia hirundo." Hor. Epist. i. 27 : "Cum zephyris et hirundine prima." Oppian. Halieut. iii. 244 : Εὐαρινὴ ζεφύρου πρωτάγγελος ὄρνις. And in Aristophanes, Eq. 419, we have σκέψασθε παῖδες, οὐχ ὀράθ'; ὥρα νέα, χελιδών. On this account, according to Pliny, Hist. Nat. ii. 47, the zephyr was named the Swallow-wind.

77. Such a swallow song (χελιδόνισμα) is given us by Theognis : ἦλθ', ἦλθε χελιδών, καλὰς ὥρας ἄγουσα καὶ καλοὺς ἐνιαυτοὺς, ἐπὶ γαστέρα λευκα κᾶπὶ νῶτα μέλαινα. Also Athenæus. In Rhodes, it was the custom for children, at the beginning of Spring, to carry about a swallow and collect eatables, singing a song the while. The sage Kleobul is said to have introduced the custom at the commencement of a famine. The song was as follows :—

"The Swallow is return'd,  
Once more she is come :  
She bringeth the Spring  
And delicious days.  
White is her belly,  
Black is her back.  
What ? from thy wealthy house  
Wilt thou not give us even a fig ?  
Not a cup of wine ?  
A little basket with cheese and flour ?

The Swallow likes also  
Sweet cakes made with eggs.

“Well, are we to have something? or shall we go our way?  
Lucky for you if you give to us; if not, we will not quit you;  
We will carry off your house-door, and also the threshold;  
Or the wife also, sitting within;—we will fetch her too.  
For truly she is little: we can easily fetch the little housewife.  
If however you bring us something, let it be much and nice.  
Open the door! open your door to the swallow!  
No old fellows are we; we are boys, young boys, still.”

This custom exists at the present day in Greece. On the 1st of March the children go from house to house, carrying a swallow carved in wood, which, being placed on a cylinder, turns round incessantly, while they all sing the following song:—

“The swallow, the swallow cometh!  
She comes from the white sea;  
Over the fields she strews seeds,  
And seats herself and sings:—  
‘O March, O March, my lovely one!  
O ugly February!  
You may snow and you may rain,  
You still have an odour of Spring.’  
My teacher sends me hither,  
That you may give me eggs—  
Of eggs five, and one cock,  
And a hen besides,  
Because Spring is come.”

I may also be permitted to mention here a custom still extant in some Altmark villages, which once perhaps had a bond of connection with the above, though now long since forgotten. At Easter, the boys proceed from house to house begging for eggs, and sing:—

“Ten eggs, ten eggs in my basket;  
You then will be bless’d, and we shall be rich.  
And if you will not give us the ten eggs,  
Our cock shall never tread your hen any more.”



78. In Thrace, so abounding in clefts and chasms, the swallow seems to be particularly at home. Here also reigned the fabulous king Tereus (afterwards changed into a swallow), who cut out the tongue of Progne. Hence in Aristophanes, *Θρηϊκία χελιδών*. In Babrius (Fab. xii.) the swallow says to the nightingale, "I see thee today for the first time since we met in Thrace."

79. Greek: *Μία χελιδὼν ἔαρ οὐ ποιεῖ*. Latin: "Una hirundo non facit ver." French: "Une hirondelle ne fait pas le printemps." English: "One swallow does not make a summer." Dutch: "Een zwaluw maakt geen zomer." Swedish: "En swala gör ingen sommar." Spanish: "Una golondrina no hace verano." Italian: "Una rondine non fa primavera."

80. Plin. Hist. Nat. x. 35: "Ea demum sola avium non nisi in volatu pascitur."

81. *Σchwafte* (Swallow); Old High German, *swalawā*; Middle High German, *swalwe*, *swalm*; Low German, *swoaling*; also *swäuwelk*. The name might have a connection with *schwefen* (to float, to be buoyant), so that the swallow would then mean the floating one, the whirring one. My respected colleague, Gliemann, combines the word with the Low German word *schwabbeln* (to chatter), and finds therein a reference to the twitter of the bird, which, it is true, already among the Greeks and Romans had the epithet "garrulous" applied to it (*garrula*, *λάλος*, *αἰφθογγος*; in Theophr. Char. vii. 5, *τῶν χελιδόνων λαλίστερος*); and moreover, as is well known, was used as a symbol of confused, indistinct, and even incorrect mode of speech (*χελιδονίζειν*). The English word swallow leads to another supposition. The swallow is really very voracious, and as its English name points undoubtedly to this peculiarity, the German appellation might also be traced to *schwelgen* (to gormandize). Besides the circumstance that the *flight* of the swallow seems to be the most striking feature in the bird, the example of other languages speaks in favour of the first supposition. Grimm quotes the Dacian word *crusta*, and the Lithuanian *krezgde*, remarking that in these words the whirr of the swallow's flight is expressed. He reminds us further that Wolfram names the ringing harp after the bird, *swalwe*; and Homer speaks of the bow-string "whirring" like a swallow.

82. Pliny, x. 34, relates that the swallow was used like the pigeon, as the messenger of war or victory. A Roman garrison, which was beleaguered by the Ligurians, sent to Fabius Pictor a swallow taken away from her young. He was to bind a thread to her feet, and by means of knots was to designate in how many days he would come to succour the place, in order that the legion might make a sortie at the appointed time. And it so came to pass, and the Ligurians were repulsed. With marked emphasis Pliny observes, "*Volucrum soli hirundini flexuosi volatus velox celeritas.*" It is in reality not the perseverance and celerity alone, but principally the dexterity of this traveller-born bird; it is the boldness, ease, and certainty with which it turns, that rivets our attention, and appears almost inexplicable. The mechanician Silberschlag, who made many attempts at volitation, did not hesitate to accord the highest prize in mechanics to him who should be able to explain the wonderful flight of the swallow.

83. Virg. Georg. i. 377: "*Vox hirundinis arguta.*" In Apuleii Flor. she is said to sing "*carmen perargutum.*" The Greeks, as well as the Romans, are rich in expressions to denote the twitter of the swallow,—*βαρραπίζειν*, *τιτυβίζειν*, *φιθυριζειν*, *trinsare*, *tristare*, *murmurare*, *zinzilulare*: hence the Latin provincialism *zisilla*, for swallow.

84. Babrius (Fab. 98): "The brown swallow, the intimate friend of man." Naumann gives an account of a house-swallow that regularly built her nest in an inhabited bed-room against the heel of a shoe that was hanging there; and of another that two years following placed hers on a bell-hanging in the corridor of an inhabited house. According to Rennie, a pair of swallows built their nest over a fireplace on the frame of an old picture, entering the room through a broken window-pane. As a deviation from the above, I add here that in Peru the swallows, which, besides, are rare birds there, do not build on houses, but, far away from cities, generally make their nest in some distant piece of masonry. They are called *Palomitas de Santa Rosa* (Doves of St. Rose), on account, as it would seem, of their delicate form and of their pigeon-like swiftness.

85. Aristot. Hist. An. ix. 7, says very justly, *Καὶ κόπρον τὸ πρῶτον*

αὐταὶ ἐκβάλλουσιν· ὅταν δὲ αὐξήθῳσι μεταστρέφοντες ἔξω διδάσκουσι τοὺς νεοττοὺς προΐσθαι.

86. Lamareck once saw, when a swallow's nest in which the hen had just laid her eggs was destroyed, ten or twelve swallows come from the neighbourhood, build a new nest with all possible despatch, and accomplish the work in a day and a half, while a single pair would have been occupied ten or twelve days at least. Arndt also mentions this as something well known, and of frequent occurrence. According to Inglis, when the parents of a swallow brood are killed, the young ones are fed by the swallows dwelling nearest. A particularly curious characteristic of this sort is said to have first led Cuvier to the study of Natural History. Cuvier, a poor student, had a situation in the house of Count de Hericy as teacher of his children, and lived with his pupils in an old castle at Fiquainville. They had one day laid a springe in the window to catch a swallow, which fluttered about there to catch the flies on the panes. After some minutes the unsuspecting bird was caught. The springe had got entangled round his delicate foot. He raised a shrill cry, and soon a whole troop of swallows were collected, and tried to liberate the prisoner. But in vain: every attempt to fly away with the noose only drew it tighter, and increased the pain of the bird. Suddenly the swallows rose all at once in the air, circled about, and then darted down and pecked at the springe till it was at last divided, and the freed bird flew away twittering with his companions. Something similar is related by Dupont de Nemours.

87. Arrian (Exped. Alex. i. 26): τὴν χελιδόνα σύντροφόν τε εἶναι ὄρνιθα καὶ εὖνουν ἀνθρώποις. Yet, in the Acerra Philol. (ed. 1717), it is said, Pythagoras and the ancients had the proverb, "Hirundinem sub eodem tecto ne habeas."

88. Stat. Theb. viii. 619. Hesiod. Oper. et Dies, 366 (ὀρθογῶν). Mosch. Idyl. iii. οὐδὲ τόσον θρήνησεν ἀν' οὐρεα μάκρᾳ χελιδῶν. Hor. Od. iv. 12: "Nidum ponit Ityn flebiliter gemens, infelix avis." Especially Aristoph. Ran. 679:—

Κλεοφῶντος ἐφ' οὗ  
Δὴ χεῖλεσιν ἀμφιλάλοισ  
Δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται

Θρηϊκία χελιδὼν  
 Ἐπὶ βάρβαρον ἐζομένη πέταλον  
 Κελαδεῖ δ' ἐπὶ κλαντον ἀηδόγιον νόμον.

See also Isaiah xxxviii. 14: "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter" (whine, lament).

89. Ἰαχεῖ, Hom. Il. ii. 315. *Pipilat*, Catul. iii. 10. It is a roguish trick of the sparrow, that he incessantly cries to the poor peasant "Gib! (*give*) gib! gib!" In England, also in Shakspeare, he is called "Phillip," on account of his chirrup. In the Prussian-Lithuanian songs of animals, the sparrow generally plays a part. Sometimes he appears as mischief-maker; see the Death of Cock Robin:—

" 'Who kill'd Cock Robin?  
 'I,' said the sparrow,  
 'With my bow and arrow,  
 And I kill'd Cock Robin.'"

90. The passage given by Bochart (Hiero. lib. v. cap. 5) is as follows:—Αἰγύπτιοι ἀνθρωπον ἀναιδῆ θέλοντες δηλώσαι βάτραχον γράφουσιν· οὗτος γὰρ αἶμα οὐκ ἔχει, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνοις τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς.

91. Avian. Fab. vi. 12: "Pallida cæruleus cui notat ora color."

92. At Oemingen, not far from Constance, is the bed of a former lake, whose strata of limestone and slate have discovered a rich layer of fossil aquatic animals. Here was dug up, in the last century, the skeleton of a salamander, three feet long. It fell into the hands of a Swiss physician and natural philosopher, Scheuchzer, who, in 1726, gave a description of it to his astonished contemporaries as the *Homo diluvii testis*. For nearly a century this error was promulgated, until the insight of Cuvier recognized the truth. Since then, this remarkable fossil has had a fitting place assigned it in the annals of palæontology, under the name of *Andrias Scheuchzeri*.

93. Hence Theocritus (Idyl. v.):—Μισέω τὰς δασυκέρκους ἀλώπεκας.

94. Arist. Hist. An. i. cap. i.:—Ζῶον πανοῦργον καὶ κακοῦργον.

95. Representations from the traditions of animals are to be found in many churches. The most famous are those (now destroyed) of



Strasburg cathedral; others may be seen at Fribourg, Mürrenstadt, Annaberg, etc. Especially scenes from the traditions of the fox are to be found in the cathedral of St. Lazare at Autun (Fox and Stork); in the minster of Emmerich (the same scene); in the choir of the Naumburg cathedral (Fox and Hare with the grapes); on the west portal of the cathedral of Brandenburg (Fox reading mass), etc. Moreover similar representations are to be found in missals, breviaries, and other religious works, which shows the incorrectness of the supposition, that these church effigies originated in the opposition of the free-thinking builders against the clergy.

96. Compare the Greek proverbs:—'Ἀλώπηξ, διαφυγούσα πάγας, αὐτὴς οὐχ ἀλίσκεται.—Γέρων ἀλώπηξ οὐχ ἀλίσκεται πάγη. "We must catch foxes with foxes" (*Agricola*); or, "Set a thief to catch a thief."

97. During the fitting season, five or six ships sail between the mouth of the Thames alone and the Norwegian coast, in order to supply London with lobsters: others bring to Holland more than half a million. If we take into consideration the consumption on the German, northern, and French coasts, the assertion will be justified, that in Northern Europe alone nearly five million lobsters are consumed in a year.

98. In this respect, the West Indian land-crab (*Gecarcinus ruricola*) is extremely remarkable. It lives only on land, often miles distant from the coast, in holes and caverns in the sides of the mountains. It proceeds however once a year (in April and May) to the sea, to spawn and brood. These animals then make their appearance from out their hiding-places in hundreds of thousands, so that the land is quite covered with them. They move in columns which often are fifty or sixty paces broad, and extend over the distance of a mile; the males lead the van, then come the females, closely crowded together. The rattling caused by such a cuirassed army clatters like the battering of a hail-storm in the night, and scares away sleep; by day, particularly during sunshine, they rest till the approach of the cool of evening, and only in cloudy weather do they continue their journey. Instinct directs them always to take the shortest road to the sea, and nothing diverts them from

their course. If they meet with a block of stone, a wall, a building, they endeavour to climb over it; they creep into the windows, which there are always open at night, frighten the inhabitants, but go out again however quite peaceably on the other side, in order to continue their march. If you oppose yourself to them, they raise their large claws menacingly, clash them together with much noise, and pinch severely. They only give way when greatly frightened, or when meeting a more imposing obstacle: then they rush about in wildest confusion, and collect again at a short distance off. The devastation which the land-crabs cause on their migrations, not so much by what they clip off as by treading down all plants, is often very considerable.

THE END.





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